Saturday June 15th

1929

Against all laws, I am going to make this the first volume of a diary, though as ill luck has it, it is not even the first of the month. But it is the fault of practical life. I cant write any longer in books whose leaves perish. I dont know how to keep them. Here in a bound volume, the year has a chance of life. It can be stood on a shelf.

Pinker has just come home, very fat. And a sense of nothingness rolls about the house; what Lytton calls the sense of "where there is nothing." This is due to the fact that we came back from France last night, & are not going round in the mill yet. Time flaps on the mast—my own phrase I think. There are things I ought to do. I ought to correct A Room of Ones own: I ought to read & correct the Common Reader. I ought to write several dull silly letters; to gentlemen in Macedonia & Kingston who tell me facts about Dahlias: to Sir Philip Sassoon who most unexpectedly sends me, by motor car, his book of travels. But I cant—not for five minutes or so. Time flaps on the mast. And then I see through everything. Perhaps the image ought to have been one that gives an idea of a stream becoming thin: of seeing to the bottom. Lytton once said,—I connect it with a visit to Kew Gardens—that we can only live if we see through illusion & that reminds me (it is odd by the way, how small a thought is which one cannot express pictorially, as one has been accustomed to think it: this the saying of Lyttons has always come pictorially, with heat: flowers, grass, summer, & myself walking at Kew) reminds me how the day before we went Lytton came, & we talked about Elizabeth & Essex. This was for the first time. And it was painful: because he minded what we had not said; & we had, to some extent to say it: but it was also

NYPL

a relief, a better order, because we were glad to say it, & have this reserve over: & glad, I daresay, that Lytton minded; I daresay there was some discreditable element, at least in my gladness; yet not much. I daresay among my disagreeables, is this that I am jealous enough of other writers to be glad when they are made to own their failures; but this was trifling. More important much was the relief that one could say openly, that one had disliked E & E for such reasons; & we began to go into them. ~~it~~ this suppression of irony; his ~~lack~~ being tied by the story; the difficulty of using reality imaginatively; a wrong subject for him: could only be treated gaily. He said he had been very doubtful himself; & this is what I liked—that though his surrounders—Carrington Dadie & the rest—all praised, he himself felt, he was not pleased unless we Bloomsbury, praised too, whatever we said mattered. And I daresay, owing to success, he minds these reservations a great deal more than I should; for I kept thinking of all the criticism I had had. ~~Als~~ One is pleased, when after long years such feelings have sway. And that, among the discreditable feelings: how I had no longer anything to envy him for; & how, dashing off Orlando I had done better than he had done; & how, for the first time I think, he thought of me, as a writer, with some envy. Yet he amused me by protesting that to write like that would be to write like Virginia — a fatal event, it seems.

Now time must not flap on the mast any more. Now I must somehow brew another decoction of illusion. Well, if the human interest flags — if its that that worries me. I must not sit thinking about it here. I must make human illusion — ask some one in tomorrow after dinner; & begin that astonishing adventure with the souls of others again — about which I know so little. Is it affection that prompts?

NYPL

Sunday 16th June.

As I finished those words, in came Leonard to say that Desmond was coming round in two minutes – which he did. So that the sail filled out again & the ship went on. [The reason why I write this is that I cannot go on concocting A Room of One's Own. I have read till my own sentences jingle in my ear – & so I began to make more] Desmond was shabby & baggy in grey. He was bubbling & simmering, off to dine with Crompton Davies at Kettners. & determined to be punctual. A vein of determination lies in him; & he is the most cooked & saturated of us all. Not an ~~Element~~ atom remains crude; basted richly over a slow fire – an adorable man, a divine man, as Francis would say. For all his power of taking the shine out of me. Happily we did not get on to that. – writing that is to say. Julian broke down in his Apostle speech; came dressed as for a ball, & ~~Goldsworthy~~ got muddled in his notes – sat down; but with his admirable Stephen solidity did not mind. Also Desmond lost £5 to Lord Rothermere, & another man lost £2,000, over the Election. What circles you live in, said Leonard; & he said that this was only due to the Empire Review. Maynard he said looked as if he were conscious of discord at the Apostle dinner. We talked of Lytton's books. But talk ran into talk; nothing could be spread out; he must not be late for Crompton. He (C) lives in Gledhow Terrace, with two leather chairs in the dining room: behind it his bedroom; he has his Kipling & a Milton that Desmond gave him. My Milton, said Leonard; & I offered to give Desmond a new despatch box. Off he went talking all the way. And Pinker came back & –

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Sunday
23rd June

It was very hot that day, driving to Worthing to see Leonard's mother:
my throat hurt me. Next morning I had a headache — so we stayed on
at Rodmell till today. At Rodmell I read through the Common
Reader; & this is very important — I must learn to write more
succinctly. Especially in the general idea essays like
the last, How it strikes a Contemporary, I am horrified by my
own looseness. This is partly that I dont think things out first;
partly that I stretch my style to take in crumbs of meaning.
But the result is a wobble & diffusity & breathlessness
which I detest. One must correct a book of essays very
carefully before printing. And so I pitched into my
great lake of melancholy. Lord how deep it is! What a
born melancholiac I am! The only way I keep afloat is
by working. A note for the summer — I must take more

Aug. 31st
This vow I kept.

work than I can possibly get done. ~~I am~~ — no, I
dont know what it comes from. Directly I stop working I
feel that I am sinking down, down. And as usual, I
feel that if I sink further I shall reach the truth.
That is the only mitigation; a kind of nobility. Solemnity.
I shall make myself face the fact that ~~I dont mind~~
there is nothing — nothing for any of us. Work, reading,
writing are all disguises; & relations with people. Yes,
Even having children would be useless.
We went into the beechwood by the Race Course. & I
like these woods; & the water of the greenery closing over one;
so shallow, with the sun on them; then so deep in the shade.
And I like the beech boughs, laced about, very intricate;
like many arms; & the ~~bobo~~ trunks, like the stone
pillars in a church. But if I were Mrs
Bartholomew I should certainly do something violent.
This thought kept coming to me. What thought could one do,
at the bottom of that weight; with that incubus of
injustice on top of one? Annie Thomsett & her
~~bad~~ baby live on 15/ a week. I throw away 13/- on
cigarettes, chocolate, & busfares. She was eating
rice pudding by the baby's cradle when I came in:
However, I now begin to see the Mother rather too clearly,

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The Moths

or at least strenuously. for my comfort. I think it will begin like this: dawn: the shells on a beach: I don't know—voices of cock & nightingale: & then all the children at a long table—lessons. The beginning. Well: all sorts of characters are to be there. Then the person who is at the table can call out any one of them at any moment; & build up by that person the mood; tell a story; for instance about dogs or nurses; or some adventure of a child's kind; all to be very Arabian nights; & so on: this shall be childhood; but it must not be my childhood; & boats on the pond: the sense of children; unreality: things oddly proportioned. ~~Next there must be~~ The Moth must come in: the beautiful single moth. There must be a flower growing

Then another person or figure must be selected.
The unreal world must be round all this—the phantom waves:

Could one not get the waves to be heard all through? Or the farmyard noises? Some odd irrelevant noises. She might have a book—one book to read in—another to write in—old letters. Early morning light—but this need not be insisted on: because There must be great freedom from 'reality'. Yet everything must have relevance.

Well all this is of course the 'real' life; & ~~xxx~~ nothingness only comes in the absence of this. I have proved this quite certainly in the last half hour—Everything becomes green & vivified in me when I begin to think of the Moths. Also, I think, one is much better able to enter into other i—

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Sunday June 30th

I broke off; somebody I imagine interrupted. My melancholy
has been broken, like a lake by oars, since I wrote. I have been so
active. We have seen so many people. Last night we dined
with Roger, tonight with Clive; Lytton came; Vita came; we had a
party. I bought a dress in Shaftesbury Avenue. It was very hot, I
think; & is now cold, indeed, for the first time for weeks, this, it
has been raining. I am writing idly, to solace my eyes after
two hours of intense correction — that much corrected book,
Women & Fiction. It shall go to the printer tomorrow I swear.
And then I can bask entirely in the light of some fiction.
But I have written myself out of that mood, & find it
difficult to get back to it. This last half year I made
over £1800; almost at the rate of £4000 a year; the
salary almost of a Cabinet minister; & time was,
two years ago, when I toiled to make £200. Now
I am overpaid I think for my little articles — And I still
think that the great pleasure of prosperity is to be able to
go into a shop & buy a pocket knife. Well, after
tomorrow I shall close down article writing, & give way to
fiction for six or seven months — till next March perhaps.
And I here record my intention to see to the writing of
this new book much more carefully; to strike out
redundancies. Now that I have, I think, gained the
free use of my pen, I must begin to curb it. Hitherto
my freedom has had to be fought for.

Helen Anrep last night was distracted & wretched, like a
wet overblown rose. Baba got out of her bed & went on the
roof & fell asleep there — so Mrs Cox proposes to put her
down into a lower class for a year. And Roger had
news that her Hampstead house was falling down;
would need £500 spent on it. And how could she
live on the income of £3,000 if she sold it to the

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Hampstead Hospital? The other day in Paris she thought she was going to have a child by Roger. "And I've failed utterly with the children I have— And I feel a hundred" So she plans planned & crooned, sitting beside Roger, with her hand on the arm of his chair. Sometimes he put his hand on hers. They were affectionate— private: this is Roger's private life. And it keeps him happy, while superficially he whisks from doctor to doctor; & springs & spas, & looks out places on the map— unable to rest to verify & track down any statement, however pointless. He told us how in some great French cave, there is a patch of green vegetation wherever the torch light has fallen. And Mauron ran his hand along a ledge & thought it was moss. But it was bats dung. The bats fly up into the air.

Desmond is being very brilliant about the Byron letters & the Boswell papers. Think! There are 18 volumes of Boswell's diaries now to be published. I feel as if with any luck I shall live to read them. I feel as if some dead people were said to be living after all— an odd effect, this disinterment of a mass more, & more of Boswell when one had thought all was known, all settled. And father never knew: & Sir Edmund Gosse is dead. These papers were in a cabinet in Ireland. And now it is almost time for lunch; & after lunch I must again read my book; with a view, if possible, to shortening & condensing the last pages.

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Monday Aug 5th

Yes that is the date, & the last was June 30th: — a tribute to the bitter shallow random rackety summer I spent. For the pleasant memories, standing out like green weed in some cast grey pond, were the week ends here: the divine fresh week ends, with the hay cutting & the lights lambent; Leonard's new room, Hedgehog Hall a-building, & my lodge being made into the palace of comfort which it now is. For I am now sitting here, oppressed by the Bank holiday atmosphere which gets into the wild country air, the lonely marshes, & makes the village seem smug & suburban. The girls & men are playing stool ball; Leonard & Percy are making a pipe conduct water into the Pond. It is a chocolate brown, & lived in by small fish. Yes it was a scattered summer; I felt as if the telephone were strung to my arm & anybody could jerk me who liked. A sense of interruption bothered me. And then these people one 'sees' — how blurred the image becomes! what damp blotting paper my mind was, as I left Charleston on Thursday afternoon, & determined not to speak to another soul. There is a sort of irreverence in treating & thus the venerable soul of man: one curses it, & belies it & gets embittered by it. More pleasure is to be had from one nights talk with old dunderheaded Ka than from these flittering & glittering. In London I should only have girded at her. Here, spreading herself out in her slow heavy footed way one took in an easy half critical, half appreciative impression, — the chief element being amazement at her exploitation. When the story was not to hers credit as a social centre, it was to his as a ~~[illegible]~~ speaker, politician, gardener, artist, husband, thinker — everything. Indeed I cut her short then

NYPL

morning, as she exalted his brain. By saying we all live in illusion: Wells' brain is one of them. She was pulled up, she jibbed a moment, & then recovered, & saw the sense; not quite, perhaps; but in her slow way, larded over with these shams & gentilities & politics & appearances, she is honest too. And we talked about Rupert. But my reflection — every visit leaves one with a reflection — was this, about talking in public, to impress, its futility, its universality: only she is more open & insolent, for some reason, than we are — or so I hope. Take away that motive from one's talk, & how much would be left? How often don't I vaguely feel blessing my sentences, the face of my own vanity, which demands that I shall pay it this tribute.

And then I'm cross with Vita: she never told me she was going abroad for a fortnight — didn't dare; till the last moment, when she said it was a sudden plan. Lord Lord! I am half amused though; why do I mind? what do I mind? how much do I mind? To the bottom I shall force up & accuse her, & see to the bottom of the vessel. One of the facts is that these Hildas are a chronic case; & as this one won't disappear & is unattached, she may be permanent. And, like the damned intellectual snob I am, I hate to be linked, even by an arm, with Hilda. Her earnest aspiring competent wooden face appears before me, seeking guidance in the grave question of who's to broadcast. A queer trait in Vita — her passion for the earnest middle-class intellectual, however drab — dreary. And why do I write this down?

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I have not even told Leonard; & whom do I tell when I tell —
this blank page? The truth is, I get nearer feelings in
writing than in walking — I think: grate the bone;
engage the expression; have them out of me; make them a
little creditable to myself; I daresay suppress something,
so that after all I'm doing what amounts to
confiding. Why did Pepys write his diary after all?
I should be tackling Mary Wollstonecraft. I am in
the thick of my four Herald articles, then cutting into my
Mothers (but I had proofs of A Room to correct) &
hope to be quit of it all by August 14th & then go
down steps by steps into that queer region. I must
make a great try for it — for this difficult book —
& after that? always adventure; with that sense
to guide me, I shant stagnate anyhow.

You can choose between us, I say, stopping 20 writing: &
get some satisfaction from making up caustic phrases.
Yet I'm not very caustic, only by starts.

Thursday Aug 8th.

This is written to while away one of those stupendous
moments — one of those painful, ridiculous, agitating
moments — which make one half sick & yet I don't know
I'm excited too: & feel free & then sordid: & undeceived; &
so on — I've told Nelly to go; after a series of scenes
which I want bore myself to describe. And in the
midst of the usual agony, I looked into her little shifting
greedy eyes & saw nothing but malice & spite there —
felt that that had come to be the reality now:
she doesn't care for me, or for anything; has been
eaten up by her poor timid servants fears &
cares & respectabilities. And so at lunch &c &
I settled it; & I spoke two words, which she almost
[illegible] at going mouth in her eagerness to show
herself delighted & eager & hard & untouched — a

Another scene, Aug. 30th; but these reflections stood me in good stead — & I laughed. Bus what a confounded bore it is!

NYPL

sordid painful scene after 15 years: but then how many I have had, & how degrading they are. & if we dont break now we drift on endlessly — oh but all these old arguments I know by heart. Whats new & strange is to have made an end yet, for though we only speak of ~~Nelly~~ her staying away till October, I dont think we shall ever begin again. This is an occasion for some of the small virtues of life — cheerfulness, & decision, & the determination to start fresh & better. In truth we never should have gone on, I daresay, if it hadnt been for the war; I dont know: I'm confirmed in my wish to have no resident servants ever again. That is the evil which rots the relationship. But now I must go to Annie Thomsett again

Saturday Aug 9th

It's all over & calm & settled. Thank Heaven be praised; — is staying — yes, we found we could get Mrs. Thomsett; & I had two minutes of energetic courage; & so, Nelly staying, the ~~wicked~~ night — but I'm too tired. And I'm too deliciously relieved to have seen into this moment & find that her story to me was precisely true — & the night documents to prove it — & was very upset — & had gone like a donkey, telephoned to Hilda — who is also very upset, & jealous & saw that my was altogether so simple & genuine & the could not have position was reasonable — oh yes, the could not have stood it a moment — but why, I ask myself, do I want to write down what is it bore me so unspeakably at the moment? Anyhow so ~~so~~ acutely gentry at the moment? Indeed I was more worried & lack of narrative power. Indeed I was more worried — angry; hurt & candid about this affair than I let on, even to the black book; yet afraid too of exaggeration: of course, one is right about Nelly — right that she is, in

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bad moods almost insufferably mean — selfish & spiteful; but — & this is an elementary psychological remark, she is in a state of nature: untrained; uneducated, to me almost incredibly without the power of analysis or logic: so that one sees ^the human mind wriggling undressed — which is interesting; & then, in the midst of one's horror at the loathsome spectacle, one is surprised by the goodness of human nature, undressed; & it is more impressive because it's unseen. For example, the night I had given her notice permanently; but instead of giving way, — & yet she had nowhere to go to — to rage or sulk, she bicycled into Lewes to get us cream for dinner: the motive being genuine I think: we must not suffer: & how could she leave us without a cook? It is this mixture that one can't understand; & that makes one always plunge so heavily in dealing with her. She said too that she would find it very difficult to get a place; since it is all the fashion now to engage cooks only who will live out (& this sentence is another example of my inability to write narrative) but we two should happen again, her spite or meanness: I shant part now, I think. And I'm half pleased to find that it is harder to part after 15 years than I thought. And I'm pleased — oh very pleased — about Vita.

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Aug 15th

These tumults over, then I had a headache. And two ideas come to me — to break my rule & write about the soul for once; — to write some exact dialogue. I put note this, it being dinner time. We are back from Brighton where I bought a corner cupboard. And if I had time, I would here dissect a curious, bitter spotted fruit: this melancholy. It comes with headache, & worse. And I had come to the blind alley — the cul de sac. Working this compressed article, where every word is like a step cut in the rock — hard work, if ever writing was; — done largely for money; & what money, compared with Nessa's children: & then the —

I suppose dinner interrupted. And I opened this book in another train of mind — to record the blessed fact that

Monday Aug 19th

for good or bad I have put set the last correction to Women & Fiction, or a Room of ones own. I shall never read it again I suppose. Good or bad? Has an uneasy life in it I think: you feel the creature arching its back & galloping on, though as usual much is watery & flimsy & over high pitched — in too high a voice.

William Plomer has been for the week end & gone. A compressed inarticulate young man, thickly coated with a universal manner fit for all weathers & people: tells a nice dry prim story; but has the wild eyes which I once noted in Tom, & take to be the true index of what goes on within. Once or twice he almost cracked his crust — letting on the stones this morning for instance.

I dont suppose you know how separate I feel myself from all my contemporaries. I am afraid I was very inadequate last night. [at Charleston] I apologised for the family party. No that was delightful; except that Clive Bell seemed inharmonious. What d'you think of Wyndham

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Lewes, of Doyle (V.) I don't like Nolds. It spoils the voice. I
like old men of 80 like Moore & Yeats who have kept their
mind working." Exactly. That's the precise point [these
are William's words] And fathers are difficult. Mine
has no interest in anything. But I don't live at Durban
for choice. I dislike Roy Campbell's prose — He used
to fly a kite at the end of a fishing rod. William
[he said the Lit. was awkward] is notably trying
to be like other people: to justify his life among
natives & Colonels, which has given him this composure.
Beside him Julian seemed a mere child; —
Duncan a contemporary. May he bring Butts to
see us? He is a very self-contained independent young
man, determined not to be rushed in any way. &
having no money at all, he gave Nelly 5/ for a tip.
I think he shows up well against the Raymonds & the
Franklins — is somehow solid; to their pinchbeck lustre.
I have now written myself out of a writing mood, & cannot
attack melancholy, save only to note that it was
much diminished by hearing Nessa say she was
often melancholy & often envied me — a statement I
thought incredible. I have still myself among two
many stools She said (we were sitting in her
bedroom before dinner) Other peoples melancholy
certainly cheers one. And now, having written my
Goldsmith brief hard article, I must think of that
book again, & go down step by step into the well.
There are the great events & revolutions in ones
life — & then people talk of war & politics.
I shall grind very hard: all my brother will be still:
my strings — ready. But I have now cancelled the regret
for some months of Richmond & my melancholy is
brushed away, so soon as I can get my mind leaping
ahead, not circling round

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Wednesday Aug. 21st.

Geoffrey Scott died last week of pneumonia in New York. Let me think what I can remember of him. I met him first in 1909 at Florence at Mrs Berenson's. We went out for lunch. – he was there; & they discussed Francis Thompson. Afterwards we went to a party at Mrs Ross's: Mary came in with a brother, both disguised as Bannes, & had to reveal themselves as Stracheys, before Mrs Ross would take any interest. Then she emphasised the fact that she was Meredith's mistress, leading us all down a lawn; – a terrace perhaps, overlooking Fiesole. I was unhappy that summer, & bitter in all my judgments; & cannot remember anything of Geoffrey Scott save that he was part of that unnatural Florentine society; & therefore in my mood, rather contemptible – long & familiar & aesthetic & at his ease, where I was rustic, provincial & badly dressed. This impression then waits without a second till that summer evening, in 1925, I think at Long Barn. I had motored down with Dotty & Vita for my first visit & had sat shyly in the motor observing their endearments rather awkwardly, & how they stopped the Rolls Royce to buy great baskets of strawberries; & again I felt, not provincial, but ill-dressed, under-equipped; & so stepped on to the terrace at Long Barn; & forth came Geoffrey smiling a little superciliously, as of old; & shook hands. Harold was behind him, much more downright & burly & tiny taste. That night we sat in the long room, & ~~los~~ after Harold had gone Vicky sitting on the fender knocking his head against the fringe of the Italian cover on the mantelpiece, ~~St~~ Geoffrey sat with us, & was drawn by Dotty into telling stories for my amusement. He did this very well, I remember, though I dont remember

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what the stories were about. He was a very clever man; Margaret; &
I tried to place him, & concluded that he had some grudge against
me as member of a circle he somehow respected but was not of:
told me, I remember, that he could not distinguish an article
by me in the Nation from one by Morgan or Lytton — we
all wrote the same ironic style — & that that was said
by way of showing me — & we were the two scallywags
at that particular party — that he was up to our little
ways & had no respect for them. Then next day we
went over Knole, where again, as at Florence, he was
very much at his ease, & knew every piece of furniture or
silver & called Lord Sackville Lionel as if he had known
him & Vita familiarly many years, just as he had
known the Ross's & the Berensons. And he was
tall, & dark & had the distinguished face of a
failure; reminded me a little of Bernard Holland &
other 'brilliant' young men who remain 'brilliant'
young well into the 40ies & never do anything to prove it.
~~Ja~~ ~~Ge~~ Harold walked ~~bac~~ back through the Park
to think out some speech about Byron, simply &
straightforwardly, rather to my & I think Geoffrey's
amusement. The others — Dotty Vita & Geoffrey —
took me to the station; & I said goodbye to him there,
& never spoke to him again: I had the feeling that he &
Dotty & Vita & Harold were all ~~an intimate~~ a set;
very intimate & familiar, & indeed said so; when they
challenged me, as usual, with Bloomsbury & its
closed walls. "But you are the same — you
make me feel that you are all very intimate" I said,
& they half denied it; but only half. For, as I
learnt later, I had broken in upon the height of

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Nobody has died, to my knowledge, of much interest.
And if it comes to putting down talk, the truth is that, except in novels people don't talk.

Well, Bernard Holland, as I have mentioned him. But I cannot put my hand on any first meeting or even sound. I believe I first heard him mentioned when I was say ten years old; & he had just become engaged to Helen Duckworth. Stella said to mother, "But can they know what he thinks then?" — or words which made me surmise that there was something dark & queer about this young man: something that to Stella seemed incongruous with the rusticity & conventionality of her Duckworth aunt & uncle. Then that little light, revealing as it was, goes out; & there is only hearsay about Bernard till, in 1902 or 3 perhaps, Dorothea took me uninvited to stay at Canterbury with Canon Holland: & there was Bernard: & he was saturnine, with his great eyebrows almost meeting; & his pink cheeks: & his gloom: & his height; & about him there hung, now more authentically, that reputation for brilliance & strangeness that was his, years ago, at Cambridge. Poor old Bernard — he's a genius, I once heard Harry Stephen say. He interested me because I imputed to him 'imagination' — the quality I most admired & missed most in my father & his agnostic friends. Bernard had edited his mother's letters, & I liked them in a sentimental way, seeing in them something imaginative too; something that was coloured & pensive & intimate, unlike anything the Stephen family produced. So that I looked at Bernard in the low room under the Cathedral with interest, & even hoped he might think me clever or imaginative or something. But I doubt that he detached me from the shadow of Dorothea. He was occupied & mysterious, in touch with politics & Cabinet ministers; highly thought of by the Lytteltons, & vaguely credited with being really much more able & capable than they were; but he was too much of a genius, too queer & individual, so people said, to do anything for himself.

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his affair with Vita. It was flaming very strongly that particular month, or week: it was the time when she returned his passion, for a moment; when he was swearing that she must leave Harold & live with him. ~~Later~~ After that, my intercourse with him was only by hearsay — through messages — Karin said her mother wished her to arrange a meeting between Geoffrey & me — & then through Vita's explanations. Later, when she told me how he was waiting for her, had left his Villa Medici & Lady Sybil on her account; & was now fuming in a mews off Regents Park ~~what~~ expecting her while she sat at Tavistock Square talking to me. One night, she said, he almost strangled her — seized her by the throat; & she turned black & he was frightened. And I heard how furious he was on the downs above Rodmell that summer, late at night, when they were driving home, from Lady Sackville I suppose, ~~late at night~~. Vita saw lights in the valley & said that I was down there asleep. Whereupon he flew into another rage — they were ~~hunting for~~ calling the dogs who had gone hunting, & the wind blew his hat off. He called me 'that woman'. And I saw him, in full evening dress, at the ballet with Sibyl. And then never again.

He is dead in New York, & all those papers about Boswell — what will become of them; & the life that was to have made him immortal will never be written; & he remains the brilliant young man for ever.

I was offered £2000 to write it

And I have turned over two pages by mistake. Perhaps I can think of some other figure to write in there, going backwards, before I need go in: & it is a lovely evening; & I want to stay out here writing, & trying my new pen.

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And Helen played up to this version of Bernard very femininely; wandering about vague eyed, cherry cheeked, ecstatic, religious; like some woman I thought in a novel by Charlotte Yonge. We were taken to see a sister of Mary Sibyllas, & she said, clasping her tea cup, that whenever she heard thunder she imagined that some one had been killed by it. There was all that kind of imagination afloat. Bernard stalked in it, aloof, intellectual, silent; appreciative perhaps, but never said so. Helen played little melancholy scraps of Beethoven; which moved me; but Bernard snubbed "What's that? Gilbert & Sullivan?" to snub her sentimentality I suppose. And then, when there was talk of going back in the train together, he stopped it. He said that he must be alone & work. So I suppose I made no impression; & received one that was not altogether favourable. A sort of false gloom was his I thought; unless indeed he were tremendously imaginative. I read a book he wrote anonymously about becoming a Roman Catholic & got a faint seductive whiff of a world where people were very brilliant & thought about their souls; a semi-worldly world it seemed; rather fluent; rather too clear & plausible & pensive, but still attractive & unfamiliar. And then again I met him at Ottolines: & then I was older, & he was more pronounced. That is he was still sardonic; cavernous; but no longer so lean, or so silent. He flirted, even I could see, with Ottoline; & had become one of those distinguished young men who are very brilliant when they dine out — like Herbert Paul perhaps: they appear without their wives; who are deaf or mad; influence bishops; write unsigned articles; & flirt, with ladies of title. Ottoline told me that Bernard had written her — sonnet after another dinner party. And then he turned Roman Catholic. He wrote a vast life of the Duke of Devonshire; he wrote a vast history of the Holland family: but that was all that came of his gloom & his imagination & his genius. — when he died, a year or two ago, even his friends never wrote to the Times about him.

NYPL

22nd Aug.

And so I might fill up the half hour before Dinner writing
I thought, and my walk that I would begin at the beginning:
I get up at half past Eight & walk across the garden. Today it was
misty. I had been dreaming of Edith Sitwell. I wash & go into
breakfast which is laid on the check table cloth. With luck I may
have an interesting letter: today there was none. And then bath —
dress: & come out here & write, or correct for three hours,
broken at 11 by Leonard with Milk, & perhaps newspapers. A
at one luncheon — rissoles today & chocolate custard.
I sit reading & smoking after lunch: & at about two I
change into thick shoes, take Grizzle's lead & go out —
up to Asheham hill this afternoon, where I sat a
minute or two, & then home again, along the river.
Tea at four, about; & then I come out here &
write several letters, interrupted by the post, with
another invitation to lecture; & then I read one book of the
Prelude. And soon the bell will ring, & we shall
dine & then we shall have some music, & I
shall smoke a cigar; & then we shall read — La Fontaine
I think tonight & the papers — & so to bed. Here I will
copy some lines I want to remember.

The matter that detains us now may seem,
To many, neither dignified enough
Nor arduous, yet will not be scorned by them,
Who, looking inward, have observed the ties
That bind the perishable hours of life
Each to the other, & the curious props
By which the world of memory & thought
Exists & is sustained.

They are from the 7th book of the Prelude. But my
it very good prelude I think.

NYPL

Whether the day needs receiving with all sorts of different colours. Today driven grey & windy on the walk; yesterday generous & open; a yellow sun on the corn; & heat in the valley. Both days differ greatly; both are among the happiest of my life. — I mean among the happy undistinguished days, ripe & sweet & sound; the daily bread; for nothing strange or exalted has happened; only the day has gone rightly & harmoniously; a pattern of the best part of life which is in the country like this; & makes me wish to command more of them — months of them. Now my letter tugging & distressing book & articles are off my mind my brain seems to fill & expand & grow physically light & peaceful. I begin to feel it filling quietly after all the wringing & squeezing it has had since we came here. And so the unconscious part now expands; & walking I notice the red corn, & the blue of the plain & an infinite number of things without naming them; because I am not thinking of any special thing. Now & again I feel my mind take shape, like a cloud with the sun on it, as some idea, plan, or image wells up, but they travel on, over the horizon, like clouds, & I wait peacefully for another to form, or nothing — it matters not which.

The picture I saw — Phil Burne Jones sitting in the Square of St Marks, in evening dress, alone one August night in 1912 — for we were on our honeymoon ~~And~~ He looked dissipated & lonely, like a pierrot who had grown old & rather peevish — He wore a light overcoat & sat, his foolish nervous white face looking aged & yet unhappy & eager & disillusioned, alone at a little

NYPL

marble table, while everyone else paraded & chattered & the band played — he had no companion — none of his smart ladies — nobody to chatter to, in his affected exaggerated voice; paying outrageous compliments, using dear & darling & giving its that once fashionable whinny of laughter which must I think have come down from Burne Jones himself — &

Phil was a kind of dissipated degenerate, spending all the thousands that were paid for those wan women on staircases or love affairs, or luxuries, or being a fashionable bachelor & fairy godfather to the Trees & Taylors & other fashionable young ladies — a very timid conventional man at bottom, with a horrid taste in pictures, presumably, but a way with children. Lowell Ph noticed that at St Ives. And I am still grateful for pictures that he drew for us. He belongs to the gallery of brilliant young men of 50. for he died a year or two ago.

NYPL

The best part of my walk this afternoon was certainly on the top
of the down leading to Juggs Corner.

Eye. Yes. but that is days ago. I saw a woman in white
sitting against soft snow banks of blue & white sky: & a child in
blue: I saw all the downs glooming & brightening.

Monday 2nd Sept. — But it is now, & I am writing these words because Lyn (Lyn,
that is Lyn) is reading in the garden, & I am talk-dried, —
& can't begin Mr Moffat? as I should, or patch up finally
those old articles. A long day it was yesterday —
rather exhausting — hard work talking to [illegible] one
one hardly knows in the orchard. A very nice young
woman, with that essential bareness — I can't think of the
word — that young women so often have — without
illusions, about herself: an honesty bred of poverty
keeping going on £200 a year in London which she earns
paying her way week by week on articles, & her father
in Aberdeen, has £600 as a Presbyterian minister, & will
have £400 to retire on, & has 5 children. So that
she will never have a penny of her own. All
this breeds a kind of veracity & clear sightedness
— certainly what I prefer, perhaps, to the lush
undergrowth which surrounds Dottie. She gardens
more or less, one perceives — but more or less, what does
it matter — her life is crowded & otiose; but
Lyn knows every object in her room, & has
saved up & bought them by saving so [illegible] week. but
that they are apart & polished. talk. & analysis:
of her? Oh I'm so sick of sitting mind
This book would form in me could I but all
its adults calm like a tideless sea;

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This was a sanguine guess — not fulfilled

this time I'm breaking my mind up; destroying the growth underneath. Never mind, after tomorrow when I go to Vita, solitude begins. I shall ruminate for a month. Lyn has this austerity. She is clever & sensible: goes to the ~~bt~~ W.C. frankly; but is not regularly advanced I should say; has had no indulgences with young men or women: has something coolheaded & sensible about her, derived from her theological father, her Scots farmers 'bent' no doubt. She has been trained in light literature & is, what young women so seldom are, a more, a trained critic. She gives her opinion steadily & methodically, rather as Janet Vaughan would do on a case (Janet was here last week end, by the way.) It seems to this trained mind is new & rather strange. Eliminate enthusiasm, perhaps too drastically. It's odd to find everything weighed & criticised from this innocent & world of sobriety & insight issuing from those round pink face; those candid blue eyes. She will spend money on face ~~[illegible]~~ powder — went to buy a sheath knife & bought a cactus instead. Oh & she told a story about the dead man on the sands. She & Enid Welsford were motoring. One night they came to a bay & Enid wanted to walk to a long stretch of sand. So they went; & Lyn saw a coat & a pair of boots in the sand; & found it was a dead man. She stopped & went back, to Jenny Enid her steps, not thinking that children might find it: absolutely horrified; her first sight of a dead person. She was made tired to come Enid & came back Did you see something? Yes I saw it. So they told the villagers. The man had been unhappily married & had seemed depressed

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& so killed himself, to be found that sad grey night — his boots sticking out of the sand, the face I suppose very ghastly.

I have just read a page or two of Samuel Butler's notebooks to take the taste of Alice Meynell's life out of my mouth. One rather craves bitterness & cantankerousness. Yet I am interested; a little teased by the tight curled Meynell style: & then I think what they had that we hadn't — some suavity & grace, certainly. They believed in things we didn't: & she had 7 children & wrote about 5 paragraphs a day for Society papers & so on — all the time looking like a crucified saint; & was also very merry & witty perhaps — anyhow absolutely she stepped in various sorts of adventure & life — went to America lecturing & made £65 a lecture, which she sent back to help Wilfrid. But this is not exactly this that I mean — when one reads a life one often compares one's own life with it. And doing this I was aware of some sweetness & dignity in those lives compared with ours — even with ours at this moment. Yet in fact those lives would be intolerable — so insincere, so elaborate: so I think — as this word paring — Viola cant help dropping in sweetness. & charity. lump after lump of sugar — only two sharp — therefore memorable things survive — her mother failed as a friend. She never gave enough. Old Coventry Patmore, whom she thought the equal of Shre., complained that he had lost the primacy among her friends — dropped out: whereupon she went alone into the drawing room, for she hated to express her feelings, & also hated long accounts of illness & death in biographies, turning her face away from her son in her

NYPL

cant them.—letting him only kiss her hand. Secondly there was the oddity of her admiration for Chesterton. Had I been a man & very big I could have been Chesterton. That is, her views were as peculiar & angular, & stuck to pedantically. She had a tone of her own. But it would be a wonderful relief if Viola would give up being pointed & precise & tell us something casual & familiar—only she cant: her mind is in stays.

Katherine Mansfield described a visit to the house in Sussex—all the Ms. in barns & cottages; & the daughters singing long monotonous ballads, & then, by way of contrast—for surprise a seedy way I daresay with their liveliness—breaking out music hall songs taught them by the brothers—Katherine described them like so many B.J. [saints] mermaids with long dark hair, plucking at mediaeval instruments & intoning these verses. Mrs. M. sat by. And saw her in 1910 (?) at Mr. Selby's: Roses; & heard her say that saying about the climate & then she threw she was ecstatic on an omnibus.—I recorded my regret that one saw poetesses in the flesh. For she was a poetess too—it strikes me that one or two little poems will survive all that my father ever wrote. But its odd—this composing that goes on as one reads a life—I kept thinking how little good could be said of one.

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Wednesday
I think the 4th. Sept.

I am just back from Long Barn, that is from Ashdown forest, where L. fetched me: & I have just eaten a pear warm from the sun with the juice running out of it, & I have thought of this device: to put

The Lonely Mind

separately in the Moths, as if it were a person. I dont know— It seems possible. And these notes show that I am very happy.

I daresay it is the hottest day this year—the hottest September day these twenty years. So the papers may say tomorrow. Really it was too hot in the garden at Long Barn. The children were querulous— Nigel riding round in between the flower beds on his bicycle, & Ben stretched on the seat saying in a reasonable sad voice. Nigel you arent well— you dont look well— Boski says you dont. Mummy he ought to wash his feet. Vita (from the window) but he has washed his feet. Ben. Well theyre dirty again. The boys Boski came in with the tea table. The boys before 8— dont fit. They cant get back from Fairlawn Vita. Then ring up Mrs Cazalet & say they cant come. I must tell them they must put it off. She went to Harold's room where they sat working with the O'Connor. & told them. Nigel began arguing. She was firm: & strode away. All this happened in blazing heat. The car was very hot. George brought a bottle of soda water. We lunched among some fir trees on Ashdown forest. & lay full length upwards, I with my straw hat over my face. Then L. motored, punctually at 4. at Duddimans (no—not that name) & we sat on some prickly holly leaves on the heath &

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talked to Vita about Harold's letter. She says her poems aren't worth publishing. She is very calm & modest; seems not to mind much — a less touchy poet never was. But then Can a real poet be an un-touchy poet?

She was very much as usual; striding; silk stockings; short & ~~scant~~ skirt; opulent; easy; absent; talking spaciously & serenely to the Eton tutor, an admirable young man, with straight nose & white teeth who went to bed, or to his room, early, leaving us alone.

I remarked the boys, calling him Sir & bending with salaams over her hand & then kissing Vita — how English — how summery — how upper class — how pleasant — how without accent. This has been going on a thousand years I felt: at least I can remember summers like this: white flannels & tennis, & mothers, & mothers' tutors & English houses & dinner with tennis tournaments settling in the candles & talk of & ladies asking one to tea all my life — so pleasant, so without accent. And the tutor was the eternal tutor of young men — joking, affectionate, stern: watching Nigel with a sort of amusement & tenderness. "There spoke the real Nigel" when N. said he hoped he had split the grass in his trousers:— like a stream flowing deep, & correct & unruffled through narrow banks. This kind of thing we never do to perfection. It is not interesting: but from its admirable completeness & sameness makes one tender towards it.

Vita has been out this afternoon & picked, I think, 7 lbs of blackberries to make into jam. Please remember this — her way of thanking me for having Lottie — after all, she has no other. And one tends to forget it.

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Sunday Sept. 18th

Leonard is having a picnic at Charleston & I am here—'tired'. But why am I tired? Well I am never alone. This is the beginning of my complaint. I am not physically tired so much as psychologically. I have strained & wrung at journalism—proof correction; & underneath has been forming my Moth book. Yes, but it forms very slowly; & what I want is not to write it, but to think it for two or three weeks say—to get into the same current of thought & let that submerge everything, writing perhaps a few phrases here at my window in the morning. (And they've gone to some lovely place—Hurstmonceux perhaps, in this strange misty evening; & yet when the time came to go, all I wanted was to walk off into the hills by myself. I am now feeling a little lonely & deserted & depressed, inevitably). And ~~instead of jett~~ everytime I get into my current of thought I am jerked out of it. We have the Keyneses: then Vita came: then Angelica & Eve: then we went to Worthing, then my head begins throbbing—so here I am, not writing—that does not matter, but not thinking, feeling or seeing—& seeing an afternoon alone as a treasure—Leonard appeared at the glass door window at this moment; & they didn't go to H^x or anywhere; & Sprott was there & a miner, so I missed nothing—one's first egotistical ~~relief~~ pleasure. Really these premonitions of a book—states of soul in creating—are very queer & little apprehended.

Another reflection—nothing is so tiring as a change of atmosphere. I am more shattered & dissipated by an hour with Leonard's mother than by 6 hours—no, 6 days of Vita. (Nina doesn't count). The tremendous gear changing that has to take place grinds one's machinery to bits. And I have done this constantly—& what is more than doing it, I've foreboded doing it—I've counted up the days & felt Worthing brooding over me. &

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then, psychologically again, having Nelly in the car is twice a strain—imposes another forced atmosphere. None of these things would matter much if one's eyes were going at full speed—how I tossed off every interruption when I was writing Orlando!—but as it is they got into the spokes—clogged the wheels—always just prevented me from getting the machine going forward. And then I am 47: yes: & my infirmities will of course increase. To begin with my eyes. Last year, I think, I could read without spectacles; would pick up a paper & read it in a tube; gradually I found I needed spectacles in bed; & now I ~~x~~ cant read a line (unless held at a very odd angle) without them. My new spectacles are much stronger, than the old, & when I take them off, I am blinded for a moment. What other infirmities? I can hear, I think, perfectly: I think I could walk as well as ever. But then will there not be the Change of life? And may that not be a difficult & even dangerous time? Obviously one can get over it by facing it with common sense—that it is a natural process; that one can lie out here & read; that one's faculties will be the same afterwards; that one has nothing to worry about in one sense—I've written some interesting books, can make money, & can afford a holiday—Oh no; one has nothing to bother about; & these curious intervals in life—I've had many—are the most fruitful artistically—one becomes fertilised—think of my madness at Hogarth—& all the little illnesses—that before I wrote ~~the~~ To the Lighthouse for instance. Six weeks in bed now would make a masterpiece of Moths. But that wont be the name. Moths, I suddenly remember, dont fly by day. And there cant be a lighted candle. Altogether, the shape of the book wants considering—& with time I could do it. Here I broke off.

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Sat.
Sept 21st

Angelica goes to school for the first time today I think: & I daresay Nessa is crying in Fenley — one of the emotions I shall never know — a child, one's last child — going to school, & so ending the 21 years of Nessa's children — a great stretch of life: how much fuller than I can guess — imagine all the private scenes, the quarrels, the happinesses, the moments of excitement & change, as they grew up. And now, rather sublimely she ends her childhood years in a studio alone, going back, perhaps rather sadly to the life she would have liked best of all once, to be a painter on her own. So we have made out our lives, she & I, propelled into them by some queer force: for me, I always think of those curious long autumn walks with which we ended a summer holiday talking of what we were going to do — 'autumn plans' we called them. They always had reference to painting & writing & how to arrange social life & domestic life better. Often we thought about changing a room, so as to have somewhere to see our own friends. They were always connected with autumn, leaves falling, the country getting pale & wintry, our minds excited at the prospect of lights & streets & a new season of activity beginning — October the dawn of the year. But I am rambling off like an old woman into the past, when as I sat down, waiting for tea, I said to myself I have so many things to write in my diary.

Another of those curious plums, things falling unexpectedly in our way, has just happened. Annie the large eyed red young woman has been to ask us to buy her a cottage, & let her do for us always, in fact be our servant here. She & her baby, aged two, have been turned out at a

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fortnights notice to make room for two spaniel dog breeders. Humanity says we ought to buy her her cottage, & take no rent—let her work it off—another £350, & repairs—more articles—She would make an ideal servant, I believe; she would be a great standby; one could come here as long as one liked—& poor dear Nelly could be left in London,—She came in again this morning, to Leonard this time, about her coal scuttle. It seems we are settling & writing almost daily. I should have to dismiss poor friendly Bartholomew. It needs some thinking—meanwhile Annie is up against the terrible huge black prison wall of poverty—has to manage with a child on 15/- a week.

These reflections, which branch off down so many paths make me linger, over the two other records—Peter, & my future, which I thought I was going to write: till tea time, & then I want to wander off up the downs or along the river, straightening my ideas. Please God nobody comes to tea. Yet Lytton & Anthony Blunt & Peter are all at Charleston. Please God pray these delightful & divine people dont come—make me concentrate again all in my face & brain. I want to swim about in the dark green depths. By the way last night in the Evening Standard James Laver called me a great writer "nobody need seek to gratify the greatness of Miss Virginia Woolf"—hah! I hope Arnold Bennett sees that.

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Sunday
Sept. 22nd.

And it is ten minutes past ten in the morning, & I am not going to write a word. I have resolved to shut down my lectures for the present. My head aches too easily at the moment. I feel The Moths a plaid-grown weight which I can't lift yet. And yet, so odd a thing is the mind, I am never easy, at this early hour, merely reading or writing letters. These occupations seem too light & diffused. Then, though write letters I wish & must — to Dotty, to Gerald Brenan, to peevish Eddy, I will canter here a moment. It is a fine September morning; the rooks cawing, the shadows very long & shallow on the terrace. The body has gone out of the air. It is thinning itself for winter. It is becoming pale & pure like the eyes of an old man. An exacting & rather exhausting summer this has been. What with people, going to London, going to Worthing & having people here, I have never settled in; I feel I should like to stay on & avoid London for a time. The car makes it almost too movable. On the other hand, this is the best appointed summer we have ever had. Never has the garden been so lovely — all ablaze even now; dazzling one's eyes with reds & pinks & purples & mauves: the carnations in great bunches, the roses lit like lamps. Often we go out after dinner to see these sights. And at last I like looking about the drawing room. I like my rugs; my curtains; my painted beams. And for some odd reason I have found lovelier walks this year than ever — ups into the downs behind Telscombe. Partly its the weather, perhaps: we have had day after day of cloudless warm sun: the sky has been blue day after day; the sun has gone down clean, clear, having no feathers or battlements in the west. And lying out here

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I have seen the sun set. & the moon shining one night like a ~~the~~ slice of looking glass, with all the stars rippling & shining; & one night I had that curious feeling of being very young, travelling abroad, & seeing the lights from a train window, in Italy – I cant get the feeling right now. All was adventure & Excitement.

As for Peter, how right how charming how good he is! – but dam it, what an unenlivening mind, intellectually. I cant put my finger on it, but nothing remains in one's mind after seeing him, nothing interesting, no suggestion. Incessant simile, perpetual quotation; he sees life with that ardour through books. And then he is mind all agog to copulate, which makes his stories centre round that fascinating subject too inevitably – copulation & Kings College Cambridge. He went through the war, & has had 4 years of battle & blood & yet his mind keeps the virginal wound, & yet his mind keeps the rigidity, at 36, of a simplicity of a girl: he has the rigidity, at 36, of a created college character. I suppose the mystery is not very rich in him – that's all – father a schoolmaster, mother a housekeeper, life in the suburbs, scholarships &c: that was his upbringing; & then coming out of his shell, he deliberately vowed to be gayer, to be individual, to enjoy life, to explore his own sensations when there wasn't much matter to go on. Hence the repetition, the egotism, the absence of depth or character; but I feel all this far more when he writes than in talk. In talk his charm – manner, his integrity, his brightness, all make him a very nice, dear, delightful, innocent (yes, but not interesting) human being. He will marry: he will become Prof. of Engl. Lit at Camb.

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Sept 25th

But what interests me is of course my oil stove. We found it here last night on coming back from Worthing. At this moment it is cooking my dinner in the glass dishes perfectly I think, without smell, waste, or confusion: ~~one~~ one turns handles—there is a thermometer. And so I see myself free, more independent—& all ones life is a struggle for freedom—able to come down here with a chop in a bag & live on my own. I go over the dishes I shall cook—the rich stews, the sauces. The adventurous strange dishes with dashes of wine in them. Of course Leonard puts a drag on, & I must be very cautious, like a child, not to make too much noise playing—Nelly goes on Friday & so I shall have a whole week to experiment in—to ~~have~~ become free in.

Yesterday morning I made another start on The Moths, but that wont be its title. & several problems cry out at once to be solved. Who thinks it? And am I outside the thinker? One wants some device which is not a trick.

The Greenhouse began to be built yesterday. We are watering the earth with money. Next week my rooms will begin to rise. It strikes me that one is absurd to expect good temper & magnanimity from servants, considering what crowded small rooms they live in, with their work all about them.

Then, old Mrs Woolf—(I mean I am making a few notes, heaven knows why, but one always thinks there is a reason,) she has come to wear a charm & dignity, unknown before, now her old age is ~~crumbling~~ ~~is~~ crumbling down all

the cheerful sentimental small talk — she becomes curiously more humane & wise, as old women are: so pliable, so steeped in life that they seem to become philosophic, & more ~~astute~~ mistress of the art of living than ~~almost~~ much cleverer people. So many many things have happened before her; illness, births, marriages, troubles — nothing much surprises her, or long upsets her. Some She is peevish & bored as a child; but has attained some carelessness of show & pomp, & respectability, as if she had washed her hands of most things, & were playing on a beach. Rather an enviable old age in many ways, though intolerable too. 'always take opportunities', I heard her murmuring to Ruka who had eaten all our soups. And then the long stories about her cooks, & how she had taught them cooking ~~case~~ when she was rich. 'now you are poor & plain' one of them wrote 'after my great sorrow' here she sighs, & would cry, but is easily diverted & presses a tin of toffee on me. I must go into the kitchen to see my stove cooking ham need

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Wednesday Oct. 2nd.

We have just been over Annie's cottage — so I suppose it is. & we therefore own another pauperised house; but the arrangement with Annie seems another of those schemes which since this time, or August, last year, have dropped into our hands here. She will cook; my oil stove makes hot meals practicable at all hours; but I am dazed with the Brighton conference; hearing Henderson orate. seeing him get red slowly like a lobster; we went on Monday too (how my days of reflection have dwindled! one must give it all up now) & heard a good, interesting, debate. & The audience ~~when not talking~~ makes an extraordinary baaing noise; not talk, not foot stamping — & I thought how politics was no longer an affair of great nobles & mystery & diplomacy, but of common sense, coming from ordinary men & women of business — not very exalted, but straight forward, like any other business affair.

The light is dying; I hear the village boys kicking footballs: & all these reflections, comments that occur to me walking are died out — the atmosphere, weather, change, London: immense: scatter: finally, my poor efforts at solid concentration. Yet I have, these last days, set my book alight, I think — got it going; but at a rate like that of Jacobs Room. Mrs Dalloway days — a page at most. And all the long day sucking my pen. And Americans write & cable for articles. And I shall go in & read Phedre, having kicked some apples — lead on the ~~old~~ cold windy road & cleaning the car.

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Friday
Oct. 11th

And I snatch at the idea of writing here in order not to write Waves or Moths or whatever it is to be called. One thinks one has learnt to write quickly; & one hasn't. And what is odd, I'm not writing with gusto or pleasure: because of the concentration. I am not reeling it off; but sticking it down. Also, never in my life did I attack such a vague yet elaborate design; whenever I make a mark I have to think of its relation to a dozen others. And though I could go on ahead easily enough, I am always stopping to consider the whole effect. In particular is there some radical fault in my scheme? I am not quite satisfied with this method of picking out things in the room & being reminded by them of other things. Yet I cant at the moment devise anything which keeps so close to the original design & admits of movement. Hence, perhaps, these October days are to me a little strained & surrounded with silence. What I mean by this last word I dont quite know, since I have never stopped 'seeing' people — Nessa & Roger, the Jeffers', Charles Buxton, & should have seen Lord David & am to see the Eliots — oh & there was Vita too. No; its not physical silence; its some inner loneliness — interesting to analyse if one could. To give an example — I was walking up Bedford Place is it — the straight street with all the boarding houses this afternoon, & I said to myself spontaneously, something like this — How I suffer. & no one knows how I suffer, walking up this street, engaged with my anguish, as I was after Thoby died — alone; fighting something alone. But then I had the devil to fight, & now nothing. And when

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I come indoors, this all so silent — I am not carrying a great rush of wheels in my head — yet I am writing — oh & we are very successful — & there is — what I most love — change ahead. Yes, that last evening at Rodmell when Leonard came down against his will to fetch me, the Keynes's came over. And Maynard is giving up the Nation, & so is Hubert, & so no doubt shall we. And it is autumn; & the lights are going up; & Nessa is in Fitzroy Street — in a great misty room, with flaring gas & unsorted plates & glasses on the floor, — & the Press is booming — & this ~~a~~ celebrity business is quite chronic — & I am richer than I have ever been — & bought a pair of earrings today — & for all this, there is vacancy & silence somewhere in the machine. On the whole, I do not much mind; because, what I like is to flash & dash from side to side, goaded on by what I call reality. If I never felt these extraordinarily pervasive strains — of unrest, or rest, or happiness, or discomfort — I should float down into acquiescence. Here is something to fight: & when I wake early I say to myself, Fight, fight. If I could catch the feeling, I would: the feeling of the singing of the real world, as one is driven by loneliness & silence from the habitable world; the sense that comes to me of being bound on an adventure; of being strangely free now, with money & so on, to do anything. I go to take theatre tickets (this Matriarch) & see a list of cheap excursions hanging there, & at once think that I will go to Stratford on Avon Mop fair tomorrow ~~on~~ why not? — or to Ireland, or to Edinburgh for a week end. I daresay I shant. But anything is possible. And this curious steed, life, is ~~perfectly~~ genuine — Does any of this convey what I want to say? — But I have not really laid hands on the emptiness after all. Its odd, now I come to think of it — I miss Clive.

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It occurs to me that Arthur Studd was another of the brilliant young men. But there was something innocent about him, compared with Bernard & Geoffrey: he spoke through his nose, & had a soft, guttural voice; & a bald forehead, & rather handsome brown eyes, like a dogs: he was canine, in some way; travelled, dilettanted, rich, with a stout mother he dubbed, & thus won my mothers sympathy. He had thick red hands, but painted in the manner of Whistler — gesticulating over the canvas, & then producing some little pleasing melodious still life, with which, rather mystically, he was very pleased. It was 'being an artist' that took his fancy. He had lovely rooms in Cheyne Walk; & the white girls & pink clouds & fireworks of Whistler hung in them. He went to Samoa, to paint Whistler perhaps, & came back when Stella was dead & grieved for her I think. He had loved her, in his fumbling ineffective way. Then he wrote little poems, about Eton, which he loved; & liked to be buried there — But why should he think of being buried, with all his advantages? There was something ineffective about him — he could not do anything; but had to us as children, a kind of romance; was supposed to do extravagant impossible things — like hiring a cab & talking in all off suddenly to play cricket at Lords — that I remember. I suppose he was the flower of Eton & the 90ties, gelatinely varnished with art & Paris & studio life, & Chelsea. He sent me a post card from St Ives once, & a poem about Eton — & then — Clap came the war; & being endlessly kind & generous & ineffective, no doubt he did great things for refugees, & died, without any notice being taken, that I am aware of — a rich bachelor; not much over 50 I suppose.

Another ~~of~~ 'young man' — not brilliant either, but congenial in my memory. modest, fresh, unexpected, & always so moral.

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Sunday
Oct 13th

It comes to me to ask, how far could I live at this moment in Nessa being with Angelica at school? Can one supplement one's life? I think a little. Julian has driven her over from Cambridge, this still cold grey morning. This journey, mostly in the country. She got into the car in the Kings Parade, where the bare trees are & the young men are hurrying I suppose along to lectures ~~about the paths~~. Then they drive, with a map on their knees; Julian rather tense, staring through his spectacles. Some very intimate things are hinted at — cycling. I know nothing — or rather he grunts & half says things, which she understands. She is very excited. At the same time practical — Julian is excited too. They are both very anxious to see Angelica — How will they see her first? She will come running down the stairs into the private room, on the left; with the Adam fireplace. And then? She will 'fly into Nessa's arms'. Nessa will hold her very tight to get the sensation of her Child's body again — Julian will call her "dear". They will go out together into the park — Angelica will like to show off her knowledge of rules & other ways & the best places to sit in; & girls will smile, & she will say 'That's Claudia' 'a Prince'. That's Miss Colly — That's Mrs Carter: And all the time they will be feeling the comfort & excitement of being together — Nessa & having only just broached their time together — Nessa will get at ever so many things: question of happiness, teaching, likings, loneliness — change. They will be very proud of each other & aloof. & Julian will peer about through his glasses, liking Nessa — Angelica better than anybody I daresay; the simple crude boy — whom I shall ~~meet~~ never know, I daresay. For — as I am going to say to Nessa on Wednesday — you are a jealous woman, & don't want me to know your sons. Don't want to take, but always to give; are afraid of the givers — What will she answer?

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But Leonard will go on moving the apples, & so I cannot write anything except this—what I am pleased to call—my diary. I wish I could write more succinctly. By the way, I write less use of the present participle. My carelessness shocks me. Nature is having her revenge, & is now making me write ~~a~~ one word an hour.

Wed. Oct. 23rd

As at this time—I write only for an hour, then sink back feeling I cannot keep my brain on that spin any more—then typewrite, & am done by 12—I will here sum up my impressions before publishing a Room of One's Own. It is a little ominous that Morgan wont review it.* It makes me suspect that there is a shrill feminine tone in it which my intimate friends will dislike. I forecast, then, that I shall get no criticism, except of the evasive jocular kind, from Lytton, Roger & Morgan; that the press will be kind & talk of its charm, & sprightliness; also I shall be attacked for a feminist & hinted at for a sapphist; Sibyl will ask me to luncheon; I shall get a good many letters from young women. I am afraid it will not be taken seriously. Mrs Woolf is so accomplished a writer that all she says makes easy reading ... this very feminine logic ... a book to be put in the hands of girls. I doubt that I mind very much. The Moths; but I think it is to be waves, is trudging along; & I have that to refer to, if I am damped by the other. It is a trifle, I shall say; so it is: but I wrote it with ardour & conviction.

We dined last night with the Webbs, & had Eddy—Dottie to tea. As to these mature dinner parties—one has some friendly easy talk with one man—about the Buchans & George Hugh Macmillan—

* He wrote yesterday 31st Dec. & said he very much liked it

NYPL

his own career:— the Webbs are friendly but cant be influenced about Kenya: we sit in two lodging house rooms (the dining room had a brass bedstead behind a screen) eat hunks of red beef; & are offered whisky. It is the same enlightened, impersonal, perfectly aware & fitly atmosphere. "My little boy shall have his toy"— but dont let that go any further"— thats what my wife says about my being in the Cabinet". No they have no illusions. And I compared them with L. & myself, & felt (I daresay for this reason) the pathos, the symbolical quality of the childless couple; standing for something, united.

As for 'seeing' Eddy & Dottie, there is not much to it: an occasional phrase one remembers— Eddy's being in love with two people: Dottie's rational account of love whom she helps: Eddy wishes me to read his diary, but some, nameless, friend objects. but he agrees, before long: this a gratification to him. And so 1½ hours passed. Dotty deplored Vita's too early fame. Yet I suppose she loves her, is devoted: queer things lodge in peoples souls;

I am very carefully & cautiously becoming a reader & a thinker again. Since I have been back I have read Virginia Water; (a sweet white grape) God;— all rounded, & teased & spun out upon one quite simple & usual psychological experience: but the man's no poet & cant make one see; all his sentences are like steel lines on an engraving: I am reading Racine, have bought La Fontaine, & do intend to make my sidelong approach to French literature, circling & brooding—

Sat. 2nd Nov.

It takes precisely 10 days for anything to happen to a book— This now Saturday 2nd Nov: & the Room O. has sold, I think two copies this morning; none before, or

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Scarcely any, this largely due to Vita: Hambourg and broadcast. And I cant remember all the things I was intending to say. — like Renard — the man who kept a diary of the things that occur to one. I dreamt last night that I had a disease of the heart that would kill me in 6 months. Leonard, after some persuasion, told me. My instincts were all such as I should have, in order. — Some very strong: quite unexpected. I mean voluntary, as they are in dreams, & have thus an authenticity which makes an immense, & pervading impression. First, relief — well I've done with life anyhow (I was hypnotised) then horror; then desire to live; then fear of insanity; then (no this came earlier) regret about my writing, & having the book unfinished; then a luxurious dwelling upon my friends sorrow: then a sense of death & being done with at my age: then telling Leonard that he must marry again: seeing our life together: & ~~trying~~ facing the conviction of going, when other people went on living. Then I woke, coming to the top with all this hanging about me: & found I had sold a great many copies of my book; & was asked to lunch by Madame Kallas — the old feeling of these two states of life & death mingling as I ate my breakfast feeling drowsy & heavy.

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Oh but I have done quite well so far with Room of Ones Own: & it sells; I think; & I get unexpected letters. But I am more concerned with my Waves. I've just typed out my mornings work; & cant feel altogether sure. There is something there (as I felt about Mrs Dalloway) but I cant get at it, squarely; nothing like the speed & certainty of the Lighthouse: Orlando mere childs play. Is there some faulty of method somewhere? Something tricky?—so that the interesting things arent firmly based? I am in a cold state; feel a cleavage; here's my interesting thing; & theres no quite solid table on which to put it. It might come in a flash, on re-reading—some solvent. I am convinced that I am right to seek for a station whence I can set my people against time & the sea—but Lord, the difficulty of digging oneself in there, with conviction! Yesterday I had conviction; it has gone today. Yet I have written 66 pages in the past month.

Yesterday Sibyl came; & I told her that she was like a bird holding a stinking mouse in its claws—& the mouse was life. She admitted it. She said she had had to go through an unpleasant business; was going to Paris this morning; would tell me yet afterwards. Then she bemoaned her lot, guardedly; how she had grown up so late, & only now began to see what it was she wanted. I gather that it is intimacy, simplicity, & friendships that she wants; & she is a little late in life to demand them; & how can she get them now, needing £20,000 a year too? So Arthur cant retire; they must sit there & see the season through; she cant, at the moment, master life; it is not a dead mouse yet at all; but wriggles. She looked ravaged, puckered—I drew her in a flash. Quite old. Her eyes were very tragic.

The unpleasant business was that she lost her new Degas—said to be £50,000, in America now gives tea parties only

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And to-day Stephen Tennant comes to tea. & Arthur Waley. On Sunday we were at Rodmell; & my room is now about three feet of brick, with the window frames in; rather an eyesore, for it cuts off the Garage roof & the downs — both pleasanter sights than I had thought. They have driven a small hole through the little room, for the passage; so that by this time, no doubt, that is in being. — things fade & run & disappear & re-appear. And most of my Joy was turned to rage because Hele Southease sale of furniture slip, & could have furnished my room. Such is our life — yes, such: perfectly so Ezra I daresay. And I am asked daily to lecture; (a convenient phrase;) & L's freedom draws near. Wright will inherit, & is making his dispositions. I keep saying "we shall be able to do that when you have left the Nation". Shall, to see what with oil stoves & Annie, battling my way to freedom. Jan. 1st is the day. We have had the Nation for nearly seven years, without making it blood & bone, of ours, as once I thought, possible. A tepid paper; neither this nor that, with the perpetual drag of Hubert & Harold, Hubert kindly incompetent, Harold competent but tiring, all wood, red apple, sawdust, placability, respectability, hesitation & compromise.

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Sunday Nov 17th

A horrid ~~at~~ date. Yes, I am feeling a little sick, a little shivery; cant settle to anything; I am in a twitter; I try to read Mauron — to write — & my lips begin forming words; I begin muttering long conversations between myself & Nelly about Dolly & the telephone: about Mrs Mulligan: I act parts; I [illegible] talking aloud; I say things over & over again like this "I want to know if after what happened the other morning you want to give me notice? . . . Well, then, as you wont answer, I am afraid I must now give you notice . . . But I want to explain exactly why this. After you told me to leave your room I went to Mr Woolf & said that I could not keep you as my maid any longer. But I havent made up my mind in a hurry. I have been thinking about it since June. I tried to arrange not to order dinner so that it might avoid scenes. But the scenes at Rodmell were worse than ever. And now this is the last. I am afraid I cant go on with it. This is the 17th of Nov. I shall ~~[illegible]~~ expect you to go on the 17th Dec." Yes. This is what I have to say to Nelly at 9.30 tomorrow, & then I go to Mrs Hunt. And I am almost trembling with this nervous anticipation as I write. But it must be done.

NYPL

Monday 18th Nov.

Well this over, & much better than I expected — at least for the present. To my question do you want to give me notice? she replied "I have given you notice — —" Further argument was attempted & cut short by me. "Then you wish to go at the end of your month — 12th December." "As we refused her an hours extra help when she was ill, yes." But this was said without conviction — I clinched it by looking at the calendar (which I could not see, blind as I am) & ~~which~~ then left her, in the calmest flattest way possible — which means I'm afraid that she has no more intention of going on Dec. 12th than I have of taking ship for Siberia. So be it. My mind is like a gum when an aching tooth has been drawn. I am having a holiday — reading old Berrick, & shall hope that the dust will be settled now for a week or two. The Horsham tiles are being put on my roof, so Percy writes this morning; which means that my rooms must be almost done. And now I have an extra room there — Nelly's — yes; & no servant in the house here — thank God — two friends to come in one early & t'other late: no more Bloomsbury jongs — no more Lottie barging in & out: no more fear of having people to lunch tea & dinner; no more pain in the back, swollen ankles, & ups & downs of passion & effusion. And so, what with the oil stove, Annie, going up the station, new rooms, new servants, the new year will be one of the most interesting — a great advance towards freedom which is the ideal state of the soul. Yet it must not be thought that I have escaped absolutely from servitude. My one claim

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on my own gratitude is that, directly I feel a chain, I throw it off: think of leaving Fitzroy; leaving Hogarth — leaving Hyde Park Gate. I was preparing to round the sentence & indeed I think I have been an old struggler after my fashion — not so valiant & daring as Nessa, but tenacious too & bold.

Monday ~~Dec~~ Nov. 25

I merely add today (as ought I not to be concentrating to the Lighthouse) that the difficulties with Nelly are to avoid an apology. She has weakened, & is now all out to catch her weakening. She wished L. many happy returns this morning. She came to me on Friday & asked me why I did not speak. I had some difficulty in being stiff & angry & saying that after her behaviour & accusations it was impossible. Mrs Hunt promises an abundance of permanent dailies, & so I think the die is cast. I have no doubt difficulties will begin, again; but not the old intolerable difficulties. no, no, never again.

I broadcast; & poured my rage hot on Lara over Vita. I broadcast; & poured my rage hot on Lara over Vita — that she appeared innocent — I mean of letting H.N. that I could easily cut my Brummell to bits. And then I discussed her friends, Vita's friends, & said that here, in their scandalousness, was the beginning of my alienation. I can't have it said "Vita's great friends — Dottie, Hilda & Virginia" I detest the Ladies' school girl atmosphere. She sat silent for the most part, & only said I was right. Harold had said the same. The thing to do is to check it. She can't stop what she's begun.

And then in a hurry to Rodmell, where the roof is on, & the floor stretched with planks. The bedroom will be a lovely wonderful room what I've always hoped for.

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Saturday Nov. 30th

I fill in this page, nefariously; at the end of a morning's work. I have begun the second part of Waves — I don't know. I don't know. I feel that I am only accumulating notes for a book — whether I shall ever face the labour of writing it, God knows. From some higher station I may be able to pull it together — at Rodmell, in my new room. Reading the Lighthouse does not make it easier to write; nor these impending final interviews with Nelly & new servants. We had a party — dining out at the Red Lion — last night: Julian & Rachel; Lyn, Hope, Plomer, Brian Howard, Nessa afterwards. Too many people, Leonard said. I don't know. I dislike B. Howard: I dislike his decadence, & protruding eyes, & unbuttoned waistcoat & floating tie. On the make, Leonard says. Plomer, on the other hand, was very plump & vigorous, fresh from the Bayswater murder; the details of which to said — how he had cleaned scraps of brain from the carpet apparently — could not be told. The young Jewess was attacked in bed at 4 last Sunday morning by a mad husband with a razor. First he locked the door, so that she banged & kicked, with the razor slashing her all the time in vain: at last burst out with her head hanging by the skin to die on the landing. If William had not been away that weekend the Chinese man would have come to him; & he thinks killed him too. But this is not his line, he says as a novelist; & the psychic ladies who invest the house like the coarser kind of bug-beetle, ~~dusts~~ disgust him with their sea-ants. They table turn, & hear ~~so~~ the voice of Mrs Fripp — (not her name) from the other side; the One, very fat with curled hair, said, "And it all happened a million years ago!" Disgusting, William said. This is the representative part of him — flashed & joggled eyes —

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It is said that Hope has become a Roman Catholic on the sly. Certainly she has grown very fat — too fat for a woman in middle age who uses her brains, & so I suspect the rumour is true. She has sat heavily down under the shade. It is strange to see beauty — she had something elegant & individual — go out, like a candle flame. Julian, for instance, could not see, I think, that Hope had ever been a young & attractive woman. She has some vigour of mind though. Lyn has less than I could wish. When she has written her review, there is not much left. And her 'ménage' — take the housekeeping & nursing her sister who is ill — take the edge off. Had she £400, she would insure against illness, she said: because illness means that one cant work: this week, neither she nor her sister has made a penny. On that foundation it is hard to have any very robust character: she is fretted & anxious.

certainly it is true that if one writes a thing down one has done with it.

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Saturday 30th Nov.

It is still Saturday the 30th November, & we have been to Greenwich, leaving Nessa & Duncan to paint Dollies tables in Mr James' shed. Mr James is one of the Morris craftsmen; & has a tile making works near the river. He wears striped trousers & spats & will sit up all night, indulging himself with cups of tea, when the tiles are firing. Now & then you take out a tile to test it. He has three kilns, the most expensive costing £300: & the ~~R~~ Rotherhithe tunnel is ~~just~~ near at hand. Leonard & I walked under the river (thinking of the pressure of the water round it:– & of the absurd sublimity of Errand boys & nursemaids walking on dry land under the river) & we came up in Greenwich – walked there on the parade where I walked a year or two ago in a temper. A man in a jersey was sitting in a glass shelter. How odd – to sit there, with nothing to do! And we saw the hospital, yellow & pink; & then it rained, & we went back & talked to Mr James about his tiles & then drove through the East End to the Garage. I bought two crumpets for a penny; & we came home. Duncan began telling me the story of the London artists; & how Roger is so much hated by the cubists that they wont notice the ~~artists~~ London artists. This is said to mean that Keith Baynes doesnt sell. And so Nessa is having a tea party tomorrow to discuss the matter with Porter & Keith Baynes. For this she bought some cakes. And they are having Cooper to dinner. So am I not thank God.

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Sunday Dec. 8th

Dear me; last Monday, as L. advised, I asked Nelly if she wished to go: & so (as I foreboded) she said reasonably no; & proposed solutions; we were landed, not unhappily, rather wearied, & disillusioned in my heart, in a compromise: to try Mansfield for a month,—(here is L. to ask about alterations—that's a 2nd W.C. & new lavatory pipes which being settled—& it's a roaring wind) we ~~then~~ if the trial is unsatisfactory then to part without further discussion for ever.

Just back from Rodmell. The roof is on; the floors are made; the windows in; glory, it seemed vast sweeping views of flooded meadows; but there was only a blank of light even at midday; we were engulfed in whirling wet; working up to such a storm on Friday night as I have, I think, never been in. It went round & round; & there was thunder in the crash of the wind; & great zigzags of lightning; & hail drumming on the iron roof outside my room; & such a fury of noise one could not sleep. So at one, I went up to L: & looked at the lighted windows in the village; & thought, really with some fear, of being out alone that moment. Suppose the tree crashed, or the slate came off? We were not very securely sheltered, there under our slate roof; little better than being at sea. Dreams were all blown about, elongated, distorted, that night. A tree down in the churchyard. Trees down all the way up today. A curious sense of community brought by the storm. A man killed at Chailey; a woman at Eastbourne; a boy at Worthing: sleeping in a shed; the wind was very still however.

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lapsing. I read & read & finished I daresay 3 foot thick of MS. read carefully too; much of it on the border, & so needing thought. Now, with this load despatched, I am free to begin reading Elizabethans—the little unknown writers, whom I, so ignorant am I, have never heard of, Puttenham, Webb, Harvey. This thought fills me with joy—no overstatement. To begin reading with a pen in my hand, discovering, pouncing, thinking of phrases, when the ground is new, remains one of my great excitements. Oh but L. with sweet apples, & the little noise about me; I cant think what I was going to say.

So I ~~stopp~~ stopped writing, by which no great harm was done; & made out a list of Elizabethan books.

And I have, with great happiness, refused to write Rhoda Broughton, ~~Ouide~~ Ouida for De la Mare. That vein, popular as it is, with Jane & Geraldine, is worn worked out in me. I want to write criticism. Yes. & one might make out an obscure figure or two. It was the Elizabethan prose writers I loved first & most wildly, stirred by Hakluyt, which father lugged home for me—I think of it with some sentiment—father tramping over the Library with his little girl sitting at HPG in mind. He must have been 65; I 15 or 16, then; & why I dont know, but I became enraptured, though not exactly interested, but the sight of the large yellow page entranced me. I used to read it & dream of those obscure adventurers, & no doubt practised their style in my copy book. I was then writing a long picturesque essay upon the Christian religion, I think: called Religio Laici, I believe, proving that man has need of a God; but the God was described in process of change: & I also wrote a history of Women; & a history of our family—all very longwinded & Eliz[abe]than in style.

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10th Dec.

A bad day yesterday, because I had to lunch, which I hate, & lost one of my green leather gloves ~~&c~~. We had tea with Leonard's mother, who, sitting in a slew room, fairly blubber fated us by her accident. The hotel was struck by lightning on Friday: a chimney stack fell; her room was filled with soot—sparks—& there she was, dramatising it, shivering, shaken, yet buoyant & secretly pleased to be the centre of catastrophe again. As usual she had behaved with perfect calm—"but I feel these things so much afterwards" & was anxious to give pounds of tobacco to the workmen engaged in mending the roof. "~~In~~ In what age," I said to myself, "have we to sit here & see those poor fellows carrying bricks? Oh their lives—carrying bricks to the roof in this gale—& I sitting here" (in a pink hotel bedroom) This is her fluid imagination—pounds of tobacco, as Harold said, won't do much to cure the social system.

This I think a proof of the pressure at which we live that I have said nothing of our lawsuit.—& have I? Rachel, William against the hotel, against the jazz band. Why are Plomer & ourselves go to Court on Friday. I shrank from writing them. facts so intolerably dull? I rather liked the scadding: Bodkin Thia; & Sweeney by almighty God; but Rachel & Wm enjoy it more than I do. This more accurately, Rachel will talk her friends about it—as I should have done. But whole days knocked out of the week bore me. I feel that my greatest triumph is to achieve a quiet evening—in which to read Ethan. And Charlie Sanger is very ill—I figure him lying worn out, worn out & without much solid happiness to show for it: like some old gold link—so good, so genuine; affectionate; honourable; but a worn disappointed man I think—no natural happiness: a continence: a the dora.

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Thursday 12th Dec.

Here, just back from Rodmell, & some rather forced conversation with Mrs Philcox ('The wife & I went to America — I dont like America — you pay separate for breakfast — room. Double 24 dollars') I wish nobody into my evidence for tomorrow though Hutchinson now says we shall be postponed — for the hotel cant get a witness. What shall I say — (I have the points all right,) is this about the Cuban.

Case settled: expenses paid: 15th Jan. Cabinet

We came back early in October & the noise was very bad. My husband wrote to the Secretary who ~~came~~ ~~back~~ wrote & assured him that everything wd. be done. Next night the noise was so bad that my husband rang up the hotel: but they said they could do nothing. The noise slightly improved, & we waited till the end of Nov. when it became so bad we were unable to sit in the room. The last was on the 29th: on the 30th it was intolerable.

How easily facts escape me!

Sat. 14th Dec.

No I am too tired to write: have been asked what with the lawsuit &c: have had toothache: & so sit passive, hoping that some ideas will form in my mind. By the way, the sales of A Room are unprecedented — have beaten Orlando: feels like a live thing though all frozen; orders for 100 taken as coolly as 12's used to be. We have sold, I think 5500; & our next years income is made.

Had I married Lytton I should never have written anything. So I thought at dinner the other night. He checks & inhibits in the most curious way. L. may be severe; but he stimulates. Anything is possible with him. Lytton was mild & damp, like a wet

NYPL

autumnal leaf. Lonely, & growing elderly; to be compared rather with Aunt apparently. Our case stands over till next Thursday, & will probably be settled in the interval — some compromise made. Yesterday they screwed down some windows — the law had that instant effect. The law was sad-coloured, impressive. We saw Mr. Preston at 10; he was in a black court coat, with dirty white bands; a self confident sandy, polite man. What a pugnacious chap you are! I heard another KC say to him in court. An admirable manly atmosphere — schoolboys come to responsibility they seemed; all so aquiline & definite under their grizzled grey wigs. When the judge (Farwell) came in. We rose. He bowed. He looked superhumanly sage, dignified, sad; the wig again cutting his forehead off & accentuating the deep reflective eyes — a sallow sodden wearied face; so silent that he was monosyllabic — could not afford to open his mouth unnecessarily: merely nodded. All was over in 10 minutes I suppose. I felt the spell of it all; that man sitting there silent under his canopy in the small crowded court, never dropping a word till 4 in the afternoon.

Sunday 15th Dec:— Looking better, but not what I call a vigorous head: an idling, unconcentrated head — too much doing in Tavistock Sqre these last days. Last night we went to see the Calendar (by Edgar Wallace) with Ann; & there was a cheer, & behold a stout golden Queen bowing in a very small bow windowed box. Also, when the lights went up, the King, red, grumpy, fidgeting with his hands — well groomed, bluff: ~~but~~ heavy looking, with one white flower in his button hole, resenting the need, perhaps, of sitting to be looked at between one of the acts — his duty to be done; & then not much liking the little remarks cast at him, to murmur his fabour(?), to the Queen. Then the Dss of York sat with the Queen: a simple, chattering, sweethearted little roundfaced young woman in pink: but her wrist twinkling with diamonds, her dress held on the shoulder with diamonds. The Queen also like a lit up street with diamonds. An odd feeling came over me of a shop window decorated for the public: there on exhibit, on show pieces. Not very impressive — no romance or mystery — the very best goods. Yet he descends, I daresay, from the Regent(?): four straight backs, this heavy blat bluff, sluggish looking man, to Elizabeth & the rest: will have his face for ever in our begrudged(?) case: history. We look these treasures(?) ... history. I thought (and so often think things) of many comment to the written. One remains. If I were reading this diary, if it were a book that came my way, I think I should seize(?) with greed upon the portrait of Nelly. & make a story — perhaps make the whole story revolve round that — it would amuse me. Her character — our efforts to be rid of her — our reconciliation.

NYPL

Rodmell. Boxing day.

And I am sitting in my new room—bedroom, not sitting room: with curtains for table: & two great views; sometimes sun over the brooks & storm over the church. A violent Christmas; a brilliant serene Boxing day; & both very happy—completely, were it not for the damnable Bugg-Stamper & his power to sell the downs to a syndicate to exploit. That this is his intention comes through Percy; & I am wrought up to protest: indeed I must write to Ottoline & ask her the name of the little man who protects downs. The place is always being risked & saved; & so perhaps will be again—cutting down trees & shooting downs are my two great misfortunes—what the Armenians were to Mrs Cole. I find it almost incredibly soothing—a fortnight alone—almost impossible to let oneself have it. Relentlessly we have crushed visitors—Morgan, Roger, Adrian. We will be alone this once, we say; & really, it seems possible. This Annie is to me very sympathetic. My bread bakes well. All is rather rapt, simple, quick Effective—except for my floundering on at The Waves. I write two pages of arrant nonsense, after straining; I write variations of every sentence; compromises; bad shots; possibilities; till my writing book is like a lunatic's dream. Then I trust to some inspiration on re-reading; & pencil them into some sense. Still I am not satisfied. I think there is something lacking. I sacrifice nothing to seemliness. I press to my centre. I don't care if it all is scratched out. And there is something there. I incline now to try violent shots—at London—at talk—shouldering my way ruthlessly—& then, if nothing comes of it—anyhow I have examined the possibilities. But I wish I enjoyed it more. I dont have it in my

NYPL

head all day like The Lighthouse & Orlando.

Before I went Clive came to tea; sat alone for an hour or two. He asked me if I had been told that he had criticised A Room? I said no. He was a little rasped: said the jokes were lecture jokes. "girls come round me" — too much of that — little ideas — nothing to compare with Orlando. And then, inexplicably, he placed O. above L: against what he said at the time. But his criticism is founded upon the theory that I cant feel sex: have the purple light cut off: & therefore must write Orlando's, not Lighthouses. I daresay there's some truth — especially in his saying that my soliloquies, trains of thought, are better than my silhouettes. But, as always, his own axe wants grinding: that Love is enough — or of love said, down one goes for ever. For we got on Mary of course; & again he protested that no one could have acted other than he did — & then he vaguely threatened an alliance, in France, with his loved — or the lady who loves. But does she love? Does she take him to Egypt? All trembles now on some unreality. Everything has been shifted by Mary. No fundament left. And I always feel, how jolly, how much hunting, & talking & carousing there is in you! How long we have known each other — & then Thoby's form looms behind — that queer ghost. I think of death sometimes as the end of an excursion which I went on when he died. As if I should come in & say well, here you are. And yet I am not familiar with him now, perhaps. These letters Clive read made him strange & eternal.

But a dog barks, & my lamp flickers — even in my perfect room. Go down to Leonard, to read Elizabethan & put our glass dish on the fire.

NYPL

28th Dec.

Bernard Shaw said the other night at the Keynes' — or
The Keyneses I have just wrecked my perfect portrait of
St Helena, have been over in their Rolls Royce — & L.
made them stay, & is a little inclined to think me
abused for not writing it — but then Clive is his
bugbear at present — Bernard Shaw said to me,
I have never written anything except poetry.
A man has written a book showing how by altering a
word or two a whole act of the Doc Dilemma is
in rhythm. In fact my rhythm is so strong that when
I had to copy a page of Wells the other day in the
midst of my own writing my pen couldn't do it.
I was wanting to write my own rhythm — yet I
didn't know till then that I had so strong a
rhythm. Heartbreak House is the best of my
plays. I wrote it after staying with you at the Webbs
in Surrey — perhaps you inspired it. And
Lydia is making "the Lady into Queen Victoria". No
I never saw Stevenson — Mrs Stevenson thought I had a
cold.

You write to tease Mr Shaw — so does Mr Moore.
Moore is an odd man — a very small talent cultivated
with the utmost patience. We used to laugh at him in
the old days — he was very dull — he was always
telling us stories about having a lady — a grand
lady — & she was always throwing something at his
head & just missing it — & he used to say "wait
wait, there's a good passage coming". Nobody
was better tempered — But he was our laughing
stock — And one day Zola said to me I've
discovered your great English novelist! Who is that
said I His name is George Moore — And I
burst out laughing not our little George Moore,

NYPL

with his stories about himself? But it was - A lesson for me, not to be too quick in judging our friend

But all his stories are autobiographic. I said

Yes, they are all about George Moore & the lady who throws something at his head. — is writing a life of Moore & has asked me to tell the story of his early days. I am collecting my works. I find that I wrote a million words about the theatre. I don't know what to do with it. My wife wants me to leave out. But I think it gives a curious picture of the time. I am ashamed to think that I would ever have written so badly. The collection is limited to 21 volumes. They are going to be sold in different bindings in America - some in leather very expensive - others quite cheap - hawked about all over America by pedlars. I'm not a modest man but even I blushed at the stuff I've had to write for my publishers. Essential to every home & so on. I say out of twelve people. there will always be 3 women as clever as the men. What I've always told them is go for the governing bodies - don't mind about the vote. Insist upon representation. Now women are far more enthusiastic about business than men. They get things done. Men gossip in clubs. Oh but you've done more for us than anyone, Mr Shaw. In my generation, & Frances Bewick (she was sitting behind) we might be real people. But we're different owing to you.

Stabba said Frances.

Then Lydia came & broke in, with Mrs Shaw.

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4th Saturday
Jan 4th

1930

This is the new year, & I shall continue this book—from economy. I am having a holiday; its fine; & so inveterate an habitual am I, I find it easier to walk after lunch than before. Far from doing nothing, I intend to write some letters, & have been pondering the Early works of Miss Eccedeh. The idea has come to me that we will live here from April onwards. And merely because of that idea, the view from my window looks different. It becomes real, something for a long unbroken time; hitherto I have always seen it as an interlude; a breathing space. Note, for that Portrait of Nelly that I should write, if I were editing these pages, that her letter to me began Dear Madam — which I hold like as Carlyle used to say "significant of much." But these are notes merely; for some reason it bores me to enlarge. Vita came yesterday with a green glass tank in which Japanese flowers expand in water—here my mind would expand like that— the advent of the Keyneses made it stupid. And we wasted our fine day, that should have been spent at Rye, talking in their very ugly room. But I am not saying that they are ugly: that would be blasphemous— this perpetual denigration of human nature & adoration of solitude is suspect. Rules, here I'm bound to the board; like an insect, for another three months; & my one fine day I grudge to society. Tomorrow we dine at Charleston & go home tomorrow to the hunt, to the dance music; to Brackenbury, to Goldie. Ottoline. Sprott & so on—to be 'seen' to 'Zee'. A little music though—the opera—that I shall like—And now I must answer letters & so start London free from that anyhow.

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9th Jan

I merely note that I am going to try to keep next week
entirely free from 'seeing' people, bating my dinner at
Boggy Harris's to meet the Prime Minister & Anglican
party. I am going to see if I can keep 7 days
out of the clutch of the seers. I have arranged to do
my seeing all this week, & have plodded along
faithfully & indistinctively: Braithwaite & Miss
Matthews, Dottie, Oldham, Golden Sprot, Quentin,
Jim Mathieson & Plomer last night, & Eddy to tea today,
Vita tomorrow, Quentin on Saturday; & then nobody
I swear on Sunday

Jan. 12th

Sunday this. And I have just exclaimed, And now I can
think of nothing else. Thanks to my pertinacity & industry,
I can now hardly stop making up The Waves: The
sense of this came acutely about a week ago on
beginning to write the Phantom Party: now I feel that
I can rush on, after 6 months hacking, & finish: but
without the least certainty how it is to achieve any form.
Much will have to be discarded: what is essential is
to write fast & not break the mood — no holiday,
no interval if possible, till it is done. Then
rest. Then re-write.
As for keeping a week free — I am now going to visit
L's mother: then to the Frys after dinner. Marjorie
Strachey to tea tomorrow: Duncan, Nessa on Tuesday;
Vita on Friday; Anglican on Saturday; Boggy
Harris Wednesday: one day remains entire,
Thursday — & that's the end of my week.

NYPL

16th Jan. A page of real life. Last night at Bogey Harris's. I came in; & hung into
the room in my red coat. A very painted indolent tall, pink woman
(Mrs Graham Murray): & the rest, in an oval room, with
painted ceiling, & books — 'Given me by Horne with Ben Jonson's
autograph — the first Edition of Dante — Lady Londonderry
will be late; dinner won't wait" I have forgotten the
Prime Minister — an unimpressive man: eyes disapproving:
rather heavy; middleclass; no tongue of the people; pink;
grumpy; self-important; wore a black waistcoat; had
some mediocrity of personality. In came Lady L:
very late; in ruby velvet, cut to the middle of the back.
Small, vanneuse. pink. current, energised. All went in
to dinner. & I was too blind to read Sir Robert
Vansittart on the man's card, so had to fumble for my
neighbours pursuit. Never mind. They all called
each other Van, Bogey, Ramsay. Eddie, across the
table: engaged in governing England: A mazer bowl
fingered by Roger, drew Ramsay for two minutes, rather
heavily into the open: look at: looked at it. laying his
shabby drab spectacle case on the table; said he had
never signed any authority for the sale of the mazer to
America: then lapsed into tete à tete with the ladies —
murmuring, unresonant. And so upstairs. Ly L.
running ahead, opening doors, taking us into other room to
look at Majolica, at ~~Pea~~ altarpiece. Then I saw
the force she started off. Fluent agreeable, had
letters, like a rider, or Captain, without an ounce of
spare flesh, telling stories — old men who had
operations & were then mad — left their money — Farquhar
muddle — her own father mad for two years — the Liberal
meddling up the Fife settlement apparently:
hardly fond — all indiscreet, open, unsentimental,
the chat of a perfectly equipped, riding her horse ~~[illegible]~~
well fed, athletic woman. Best control. 'Dear Eddie,
We discussed
Very fine.

NYPL

you want let me convert you—But when you see your women, with those terrible illegitimate children—

Eight in a room. One bed—what can you expect? They break straight out at times. The old fashioned ones—Can't do anything else. What would you do? What should we do, if we lived like that? But we're not beasts. We can control ourselves. I detest Prohibition for that reason." Jolly Pawn, emphatically, confidently, to the Webbs (woman sprang up beside me like a Cobra" Our Clan & yours can never meet?" What difference is there? But these clever people! Yeats & Lady Gregory on a Committee on Prohibition—but both very clever people. Can't do anything

Lady L. can do whatever she wishes. She looked like an Early Victorian picture—a Lawrence, I thought: a small pinched well cut face; healthy; without paint; very pink. pearls knotted about her wrists. The other woman Garish, like a faded almond blossom. The rooms all about with cases, chests, pictures, objects. "I never give more than £10: I hunt about in rag & bone shops." Bogey has the glazed stuffed look of these well fed bachelors. Is evidently one of those elderly comfortable men of taste & leisure who make a profession of society: has a perfectly instinctive snob. knows everyone; lunches with Lord Lascelles: has taken the measure of it all exactly; neither brag; proficient; wary; adept: an unattractive type with all his talk of Lords & ladies, his belief in Great houses: something of a gorged look, which connoisseurs have: as if he had always just swallowed a bargain. something airless & too tidy in the house: a ~~[illegible]~~ plethora of altar pieces. He pads about, gorged, without any thing to seek for, rare in old rag & bone shops; at the crest (I suppose) of his

NYPL

world. I suppose that this centre to one's mind — an albatross —
is a bad one; too still & ~~to be acquired.~~ capable of acquisition.
She never wants anything unattainable. I daresay £20 has
feathered her nest. Roger says she has 'flair'; Roger who looks
like a ravaged scavenger & lives with sardine tins &
linoleum: yes, but Roger's house seems alive, with a
living hand in it, inarticulated, stretched ~~on the~~
Why do interesting people never fix them down among
objects (beautiful) & Duchesses (desirable) I tried,
sitting on a priceless settee, perched up in Whitechapel for
£10 (I never give more) to analyse my sensation.
The ladies showed a perfect commercial grasp of the
situation. Nancy was tossed between them like a
fish among cormorants. I had the impression that they did
not rate their acquaintance high: but took it as part of the
days work. Ly L. had her to lunch in a shaded room for a
hour. Failing that, she had her & Clarin walked down to
hand her.

~~Angle~~ Angelica said at the pantomime, as we watched the
spangled lady dance, "I shall never be able to dance
like that but I may be able to paint like the dancer."

NYPL

Monday
Jan. 26th

I am 49: we have been at Rodmell—a wet, windy day again; but on my birthday we walked among the downs, like the folded wings of grey birds; & saw first one fox, very long with his brush stretched; then a second; which had been barking, for the sun was hot over us: it leapt lightly over a fence & entered the furze—a very rare sight. How many foxes are there in England? At night I read Lord Chaplin's life. I cannot yet write naturally in my new room, because the table is not the right height, & I must stoop to warm my hands. Everything must be absolutely what I am used to.

I forgot to say that when we made up our 6 months accounts, we found I had made about £3,020 ~~this~~ last year—the salary of a civil servant: a surprise to me, who was content with £200 for so many years. But I shall drop very heavily I think. The Waves wont sell more than 2,000 copies I think. I am stuck fast in that book—I mean, glued to it, like a fly on gummed paper. Sometimes I am ~~all~~ out of touch: but go on; then again feel that I have at last, by violent measures—like breaking through gorse—set my hands on something central. Perhaps I can now say something quite straight out; & at length; & need not be always casting a line to make my book the right shape. But how to pull it together, how to comport it—press it into one—I do not know: nor can I guess the end—it might be a gigantic conversation: The interludes are very difficult, yet I think essential; so as to bridge & also give a background—the sea; insensitive nature—I dont know. But I think, when I feel this sudden direction—that it must be right: anyhow no other form of fiction suggests itself except as a repetition at the moment.

It has sold about 6,500 to day, Oct. 30 1931—after 3 weeks. But will stop now, I suppose.

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Lord Buckmaster sat next me—I was talking to Desmond about Irene. Suddenly Ethel said very across,

But did you ever know Lord Tennyson? & my evening was ruined. Typical of these parties.

Mon. Feb. 10th

Charlie Sanger died yesterday, the very fine cold day when we were driving up. I feel sorry in fits. I wish we had dined there. I think he was some peculiar thing—loyal, warm, romantic; glowing with affection. He knew us when Thoby died: had always clasped my hand warmly. Sat sparkling, glittering, elfish; very sympathetic, very serious, in the right way. He had a stern view.) I think: had found life hard; & encouraged its hardness for others. Yes; I have a peculiar feeling for him—can one say more? And this is the sorrow for him—feeling one will never again have that. (I cant analyse—have indeed a slight temperature, & am in two minds if it is influenza, & whether to tell Leonard, who has had it—to put off Ethel Smyth, & Nessa—to go to bed—what is the sensible thing to do?)

Sunday Feb. 16th

To be in bed for a week. I am sitting up today, in the usual state of unequal animation. Below normal, with spasmodic desire to write, then to doze. It is a fine cold day, & if my energy & sense of duty persist, I shall drive up to Hampstead. But I doubt that I can write to any purpose. It Cloud swarms in my head. One or two curious of the body—jolted out of the rut of life to get back to fiction. Once or twice I have felt that odd whirr of wings in the head ~~about~~ which comes when I am ill so often—last year for example, at this time I lay in bed constructing A Room of One's Own (which sold 10,000 two days ago) If I could stay in bed another fortnight (but there is no chance of that)

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I believe I should see the whole of the Waves. Or of course I
might go off on something different. As it is I half incline to
revert upon a dash to Cassis; but perhaps this needs more
determination than I possess; & we shall dwindle on here.
Rather a walking about the room looking for the right
patch — a sign of spring. I believe these illnesses are in
my case — how shall I express it? — partly mystical.
Something happens in my mind. It refuses to go on
registering impressions. It shuts itself up. It becomes
chrysalis. I lie quite torpid, often with acute
physical pain — as last year; only discomfort this.
Then suddenly something springs. Two nights ago,
Vita was here; & when she went, I began to feel the
quality of the evening — how it was spring coming: a
silver light; mixing with the early lamps; the
cabs all rushing through the streets; I had a tremendous
sense of life beginning; mixed with that emotion —
which is the essence of my feeling, but escapes description —
(I keep on making up the Hampton Court scene in
the Waves — Lord how I wonder if I shall pull
this book off! It is a litter of fragments so far)
Well, as I was saying, between these long pauses,
for I am swimming in the head, & write rather to
stabilise myself than to make a coherent
statement) I felt the spring beginning,
& Vita's life so full & flush; & all the
doors opening; & this is I believe the moth
shaking its wings in me. I then begin to make up
my story whatever it is: ideas rush in me;
often though this is before I can control my mind or
pen. It is no use trying to write at this stage.

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And I doubt if I can fill this white monster. I would like to lie down & sleep, but feel ashamed. Leonard brushed off his influenza in one day; went about his business feeling the
Here am I still wasting, undressed. with Elly coming tomorrow. But as I was saying my mind works in idleness. To do nothing is often my most profitable way. I am reading Byron: Maurois: which sends me to Childe Harold; makes me speculate. How odd a mixture: the weakest sentimental Mrs Hemans combined with trenchant bare vigour. How do they combine? And sometimes the descriptions in C.H. are "beautiful"; like a great poet.

There are the three elements in Byron:

1 the romantic dark haired lady singing drawing room melodies to the guitar.

"Tambourgi! Tambourgi! thy 'larum afar
Gives hope to the valiant, & promise of war;
. . . . .

Oh! who is more brave than a dark Suliote
In his snowy camese & his shaggy capote?

— something manufactured; a pose; silliness:

2 then there is the vigorous rhetorical, like his prose, & good as prose.

Hereditary Bondsmen! know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?
By their right arms the conquest must be wrought?
Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? No! . .

3 Then what rings to me truer, & is almost poetry.

Dear Nature is the kindest mother still!
Though always changing, in her aspect mild;

NYPL

(Call in Canto II or CH.)

From her bare bosom let me take my fill,
Her never-weaned, though not her favoured child.

x x x

To me by day or night she ever smiled,
Though I have marked her when none other hath,
And sought her more & more, & loved her best in wrath.

4. And then there is of course the pure satire, as in the description of a London Sunday: & finally (but this makes more than three)
5. the indubitably half assumed half genuine tragic note, which comes in a refrain, about death & the loss of friends.

All thou could have of mine, stern Death! thou hast;
The parent, friend, & now the more than friend:
Ne'er yet for one thine arrows flew so fast,
And grief with grief continuing still to blend,
Hath snatched the little joy that life had yet to lend."

These I think make him up; & make much that is spurious, vapid, yet very changeable, & then rich & with greater range than the other poets, could he have got the whole into order. A novelist. he might have been— It is odd however to read in his letters his prose & apparently genuine feeling about Athens: & to compare with the convention he adopted in verse. (There is some sneer about the Acropolis) But then the sneer may have been a pose too. The truth may be that if you are charged at such high voltage you cant fit any of the ordinary human feelings: must pose; must rhapsodise; dont fit in: He wrote in the Inn Album that his age was

100. And this is true. measuring life by feeling.

NYPL

17th Feb. And the temperature is up; but it ~~then~~ has now gone ~~went~~ down; & ~~now~~ Feb. 20th; I must canter my wits, if I can.
Perhaps some Character Sketches.

<u>Snow</u>:

She came in wrapped in a dark fur coat; which being taken off, she appeared in nondescript grey stockinette & jay blue stripes. Her eyes too are jay blue, but have an anguished starved look, as of a cat that has climbed onto a chimney piece & looks down at a dog. Her face is pale, & very small; ~~but~~ indeed, ~~it~~ has a curious preserved innocency which makes it hard to think that she is 50. However, her neck is very loose skinned; & there are the devilries of middle age. The preserved look seems to indicate lack of experience; as if life had put her in a refrigerator. And we talked — she brought me a parcel, & this was a book from Ethel Smyth with a letter, which to veil the embarrassment which I supposed her to feel, I read aloud. Her comment was "What miles away all this is from Cheltenham!" Then we talked — but never her starved & anguished look that remains the attitude of mind. She seemed to be saying inwardly "I have missed everything. There are Vanessa & Virginia. They have lived full of parcels & husbands & exhibitions. I am fifty & it has all slipped by." I gathered this from the jocose pertinacity with which she kept referring to St Cheltenham is heavily. She said the climate of so sleepy that then after cant want; & after lunch they put on the gramophone; & then if she goes most days to her mother at Bockhampton, where she likes making the village people. Farmers never shake hands. after her mother's death — but she is only 50 & as firm as a rock — she & Lily

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who is historical, but of course that doesn't take up all her time exactly; are going to live at Harrogate, where the climate is not so sleepy, & they know more people. Nothing long distracted her from her central wisdom — I have had no life & life is over. Even clothes suggested the same old theme. A dressmaker had told her that one enjoyed life more if one was well dressed. So she was trying this recipe, to the tune of £8.8 at Pomeroys — Old Burlington Street. But this worried & fretted her too. In fact I have seldom got a more dismal impression of suffering — too negligible & petty to be called suffering: call it rather frustration, non-entity; being shelved on a shelf & seeing things pass; "but then I am very lazy — that's what it is — I lapse into comfort." I should call it lapsing into despair. "What can three women do alone in the country?" Lord, how I praise God that I had a bent strong enough to coerce every minute of my life since I was born! This fiddling & diffing — not impressing oneself upon anything — this always refraining & fingering & cutting things up into little jokes & facetiousness — that's what's so annihilating — Yet given little money, little looks, no special gift, but only enough to make her disastrously aware that other people have more gift, so that she sees her still lives against the inferior still lives of Margaret Gere & the Cotswold school, — ~~this~~ How what can one do? How could one battle? — How could one leap on the back of life & wring its scruff? One would joke, be tender; & become egotistical & anxious to explain & excuse: & plaintive. What I thought most pathetic was the fact that about 5.30 she began to fidget (she never does anything boldly & directly) with her gloves. — Say she must be

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going. But where? I asked. To the Polytechnic to hear a lecture upon French literature. But why? "Oh one never hears French talked in Cheltenham!" Dear dear. but I could tell you all about French literature, I said. However, she shuffled shuffled; & whether she wanted to go or to stay, I dont know. But And when I asked her what she was going to do that night, Well that depends how long the lecture lasts, she said. feebly laughing. Wont you go to a play? No I think I shall have what is called a snack at the Temperance hotel; — Lord Lord, I repeat again: And it's not as if she were unconscious & oblivious; no, she knows that the dog is there, & arches her back & puts out her paw, but ever so feebly — furtively.

Friday Feb 21st

No two women could be more extravagantly contrasted than Margery Snowden & Ethel Smyth. I was lying here at four yesterday when I heard the bell ring then a brisk tramp up the stairs; & then behold a bluff, military old woman (older than I had expected), bounced into the room, a little glazed flyaway & abrupt; in a three cornered hat & tailor made suit.

"Let me look at you"

That over, Now I have brought a book & pencil. I want to ask.

Here there was a ring at the bell. I went out. to look one.

Then we went to tea. First I want to make out the genealogy of your mothers family. Old Pattle — have you a picture? No. Well now — this we sorted out the names of his daughters

afterwards, on the sofa, with Ethel sketching her tea.

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legs out on Parkers basket, we talked ceaselessly till 7 – when L. came in. We talked – she talked considerably more than I. (On the steam voyage to tea I had asked to be Virginia: ~~after tea~~, about ten minutes after tea she asked to be Ethel: all was settled: the basis of an undying friendship made in 15 minutes: – how desirable: how rapid:) & she got off; oh about Maurice – I am said to be an egoist. I am a fighter. I feel for the underdog. I rang up Hugh, Allen & suggested lunch. My dear Sir Hugh – my dear Ethel – there are lots you dont know about your sex. Believe me I have to go on Coingsby London, bulldogs, buggery – at last, they promise me 14 women in the orchestra. I go & find L. So I began ringing up."

She has a vein, like a large worm, in her temple which swells. Her cheeks redden. Her faded eyes flash. She has a broad rounded forehead. She seemed to dream. I have to go to Bath to hear dear Maurice Baring's little plays: & then we go to [here Elly interrupted] Rottingdean. And I must take an evening suit. That's what worries me. I'm always happy in this – I have one gown I wear for Canterbury. And then I have to pack [here is a pineapple from Leonard's mother who waits outside] My maid? But she's only a general – an Irish woman. "Dr. (She calls me Dr.) Mrs. Woolf doesnt mean to see you – Here another letter from her – to put you off – But I've come. And dont it strike that my appetite for life is still great? I've thought of nothing but seeing you for 10 days. And this friendship has come to me so sincere & abrupt as this, so new."

NYPL

Enid Bagnold.

discriminating unreal — judging Ethel & her secondrate women friends shrewdly — that perhaps something gritty, & not the usual expansive stuff, may come yet. I like to hear her talk of music. She has written a piece — on Brewster's Prisoner; & will ~~now~~ have this gorgeous fun of orchestrating it this summer. She says writing music is like writing novels. One thinks of the sea — naturally one gets a pleasure first. Orchestration is colouring. And one has to be very careful with one's technique. Rhapsodises about A Room; about Mrs Williamson; about the End of some book of Maurice Barings: "I'm in the street. I belong to the crowd. I say the crowd is right." Perhaps there is right to belong to the crowd. There is something fine & tried & experienced about her besides the vanity & the rest & the egotism — & I'm not sure that she is the egoist that people make out. As she said she never had anybody to admire her, & therefore might write good music to the end. Has to live in the country because of her passion for games. Plays golf. rides a bicycle: was thrown hunting two years ago. Her arm & was in despair, because life wd. be over if she could not play games. I am very strong. & that she proved by talking till 7.30; then eating a biscuit & drinking a glass of vermouth & going off to eat a supper of maccaroni when she got to Woking at 9. "I'll tell you all about it" she cried at her maid, who asked if I was a nice woman. A fine old creature. Certainly, Ethel! She talks French "a merveille" with a highly French accent.

NYPL

Feb. 22nd.

I had meant to write a sketch of George — Sir George White — worth — as he announced himself to Netty — & of Lytton: both unexpected visitors yesterday — for I'm not to go down to the Studio till Monday; & to meet carrying pen unavoidably now: but ten minutes ago the idea came to me of a possible broadsheet; which I wd. like to adumbrate, before discussing with L.

My notion is a single sheet, containing say 2,000 or if printed back & front 4,000 words. Art, politics, Lit; music: an essay by a single writer to be printed at irregular intervals; sent to subscribers; costing 6d.: sometimes only a reproduction: It should be a statement about life — something somebody wants to say: not a regular comment. Very little expense wd. be involved — It would have a spring & an urgency about it wh. the regular sheets lack. Sometimes only a picture — To be closely under L. & my thumbs, so as to give character & uniformity. To labour for a ~~week~~ month of weaving. No circular of regular appearance — A circular signed by L. & me to be sent round — Young writers enlisted. Signed — articles. Everything for humblest, less least ostentation — The Hogarth News. The Broadsheet. — name to be decided. Gen. dir. I wd. like to write on Scott this week. & can't, because Richmond has sent the book already. L. wd. do politics. Roger art. The young would have their say. Possibly, if expenses were kept down, they could get £5 a so. & have their names. But they must not be essays — always — must be topical to some extent.

And in June. I was offered the Editorship of a 4thly: by the Ld Bott[?] Autographer & Mr Times of the Book Club: L: is refusing it at this moment (30th June)

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That funny enough to go upon in talk after lunch — & this a
fine still day & perhaps we may drive to Richmond & try my
legs walking — I will obediently, like a student in the art
school — sketch Sir George. First his jowl: this of the
finest semi-transparent flesh; so that one longs to + slice it,
as it rests, infinitely tender, upon his collar. Otherwise
he is as ~~she~~ tight as a drum. One expects his trousers to
split as he sits down. This he does slowly & sees with
difficulty. Still some sentiment begins to form misty
between us. He thinks of Mother. I daresay there is
are some shadowy likeness — well — & then he is not
now in a position to do me harm. His ⊕ conventions
amuse me. I suppose these family affections are
somehow self-protection. He preserves a grain or two of
what is me — my unknown past; my self; so that if
George died, I should feel something of myself buried.
He is evidently self-complacent. His stories, once
started, roll comfortably — he is immensely
comfortable — ~~like~~ into the pocket of his solid selfesteem
I ask, What about the hogs. (the Chesterfield hogs)
& he tells that the cowman's wife has had a
very long labour. Margaret has been very worried. They had to
Waiting room was lit up all night. The woman
use the telephone — to send for the Dr. — & so it goes on,
Mother slept in the house the drama of ~~good~~ the
[illegible], cosily & contentedly — which I have no
~~Georg~~ Good masters & makers — And he trots out his letter
doubt they are. ~~Sell the~~
compliments — asked to be Sheriff —
~~George~~ And he wishes to know of Sam making
fabulous sums — & he chuckles & dimples &
exhorts me for ~~ab~~ being asked to a party by
the Lord Mayor. And he twits Eddy Marsh

See
Sir George
Duckworth on
'Pigs' in
todays Times.
'Pigs are the
most
intelligent of
animals.
I own a
small
herd of
white pedigree
hogs"

for being fond of the society of the great. And he deplores the nudity of Nessa's pictures — & so prattles & chortles & gives me ~~green~~ turtle soup & advice about the preparation & so on takes himself off, to meet Henry & return to Dalingridge & the cowman & the hogs — a very uncultivated race — & his cook Janet & his Bronnie, home on leave from the Navy — well, it does appear as if human life were perfectly tolerable: his village is absolutely normal. The world has been made for him.

Lytton came in after dinner. Very twinkly, lustrous, easy & even warm. Leonard made off after — I lay on the sofa in the twilight of cushions. Lytton had been sent a book about Columbus & told the story making it into a fantastic among Lytton book — Columbus a mad religious fanatic who sailed west & west because he had read in Isaiah a prophecy; his crew being convicts let out from prison; & they came to Cuba & he made them sign a statement that this was India, because it was too large to be an island; & they picked up gold & gems & went back to Spain & the King & Queen rose as he came in. Here are all the elements of a Lytton concoction. Love [illegible] that gusto & crowns; a sense of the incongruous — dramatic. Then he warbled melodiously about Dadie, & Cambridge; & Charlie; & so on. He has a new gramophone. He is ~~[illegible]~~ editing Greville. He is very content too — not for George's reasons; & very well equipped, & buys books; & likes his; & is going to Cambridge this week end. It's odd how little one remembers what is actually said. I am thinking of the new paper.

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March 6th '31
to Hamilton
Garden
embankment

And then I went for a walk & brought on a headache, & 20
lay down again like lodestone. Saturday—a fine day—when we
propose to drive off—oh thank God a thousand times—to
Rodmell & there be at rest. This illness has taken 3
weeks, & will land me in 4, of non-writing my experiences.
Yet I'm not sure that this is not the very thing for the Waves.
It was dragging too much out of my head—If ever a book
drained me, this one does. If I had wisdom, no doubt I should
potter at Rodmell for a fortnight, not writing.
I shall take a look at one of these mornings in my
sitting room.
One evening here I had the odd experience of perfect rest—
[illegible]. All the bayonets that prod me sank. Then I
lay (I dozing for an hour) sleeping. And the peculiarity was
odd. Not an anxiety, not a desire anywhere. No one coming.
Nothing to do. All strain ceased. A supreme feeling of...
through the clouds [illegible] (I am quoting—I think Shelley
& it make nonsense.) This is the rarest of all my (peace...)
moods. I had recall another. Perhaps at Rodmell
sometimes: Everything is shut off. It depends upon having—
been in the stir of London for some time. Not to have to
get up & see Sibyl or Ethel or anybody—what a supreme
relief! And now I have a chance to brew a little
fresh thought. Yesterday I was offered £2,000
to write a life of Boswell by Doran & Heinemann.
L. is writing my letter refusal this moment.
I have bought my freedom. It gives me thought that I
have actually paid for the power to go to Rodmell & If I
only that & the Waves by refusing this offer; not
accepted I would buy house, tables & John Stanley; 57 Russell of the
work it— Yesterday we went over 57 Russell Sq. But I rather dread the noise
—we may take. But I rather dread the noise
—we may take. But I don't know— A lovely view
& the size — I don't know—

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March 3rd.

Bedroom again. My new bedroom again. Children playing in the school. A thick ~~pearl~~ pearl grey blue day; water drops on the window. If my health were shown on a thermometer there'd gone up 10 degrees since yesterday, when I lay, mumbling the bones of words:— of that bones; now I get up, but cannot face going down & bringing me MS. to read. Curiosity begins to stir all the same. Such is the effect of 24 hours here, & one saunter for 30 minutes on the flats. The sun rolls up, like a ... behind the clouds. Tremendous shoals of birds are flying;— & the flop eared trains making as usual under Caburn.

Molly Hamilton writes a d—d bad novel. She has the gift to construct a method of telling a story; & then heaps on to the dreariest most confused ~~heap~~ litter of dead clothes— when I stop to read a page attentively I am shocked by the dishabille of her English: It's like ~~—~~ heaving cooks, & scullions chattering; the scarcely articulated clatter. Clatter clatter— I imagine, a block of paper on her knee, either at Home or commuting perhaps; or in the Tube. And the quality of the emotion is so thick & squat, the emotions of secondrate women painters: ~~—~~ or, the emotions of shotten & pimpled young men: I don't know how she conveys such a sense of the secondrate without effort: the soft pedal used, & the highminded pedal; & no wit; & not sarcasm; & no word standing alone, but each stepping on to the shoulder of another— Lord what a style! what a mind. What energy & some ability— chubbily shown in the method; but that breaks down; & that too is laboriously lifted— Now I must read being still flabby in the muscle of the mind.

Lea Aw— a good manuscript.

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11th March —

all because I have to buy myself a dress this afternoon, & cant think what I want, I cannot read. I have written, fairly well — but its a difficult book — at Waves: but cant keep on after 12; & now shall write here for 20 minutes.

My impressions of Margaret & Lilian at Monks House were of great lumps of grey coat; straggling wisps of hair; hats sloppy & home made; thick woollen stockings: black shoes, many wraps, shabby handbags, & shapelessness, & shabbiness & dreariness & drabness unspeakable. A tragedy in its way. Margaret at any rate deserved better of life than this dishevelled & undistinguished end. They are in lodgings — as usual. have as usual, a wonderful & sympathetic landlady; are somehow repelled by active life; sit knitting perhaps, smoking cigarettes, in the parlour where they have three meals, where there is always left a dish of oranges & bananas. I doubt if they have enough to eat. They seemed to me flabby & bloodless, spread into rather tasteless chunks of flesh; & having lost any commerce with looking glasses. So we showed them the garden, gave them tea (~~??~~ & I dont think an iced cake had come Lilians way this 6 weeks) & then — oh the dismal sense of people stranded, wanting to be energised; drifting — all woollen & hairy. (The odd how the visual impression dominates.) There is a gay blue spark in Margarets eye, now & then. But she had not been out of the lodging for 5 weeks because of the East wind. Her mind has softened & wrinkled, sitting indoors with the oranges & cigarettes. Lilian is almost stone deaf,

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& mumbles & crumbles, emerging clearly only once, to discuss
politics. Something has blunted Margaret's edge, rusted it,
worn it, long before its time. Must old age be so
shapeless? The only escape is to work the mind. I shall
write a history of English literature, I think, in those days.
And I shall walk. And I shall buy clothes, & keep my
hair tidy, & make myself dine out. But
perhaps life becomes different: one takes no trouble;
is glad to be shovelled about in motor cars. M.
has her tragic part. She is pathetic to me now —
conciliatory, nervous where she used to be trenchant —
severe. Janet she says writes endless notes; has
visitors for ever staying with her to convalesce; & Emphie,
caught up their little white dog the other day from
a wild herd of racing greyhounds, & had it
bitten to death in her arms. This is the sort of
adventure that only befalls elderly unmarried
women, on whom it makes a tremendous & very
painful impression — so defenceless are they, so
unable to throw off the damp blanket that
surrounds them — what I mean is colour, energy,
any clear reflection of the moment. I see them
thick stockings & grey hairy wraps everywhere.

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17th March.

The test of a book (to a writer) is if it makes a space in which, quite naturally, you can say what you want to say. As this morning I could say what Rhoda said. This proves that the book itself is alive: because it has not crushed the thing I wanted to say, but allowed me to slip it in, ~~perfect~~ without any compression or alteration.

28th March.

Yes, but this book is a very queer business. I had a day of intoxication when I said Children are nothing to this: when I sat surveying the whole book complete, & gravelled with it & (about Ethel Smyth) & walked it off, & felt the pressure of the form – the splendour – the greatness – as perhaps I have never felt them. But I shant race it off in intoxication. I keep pegging away; & find it the most complex, & difficult of all my books. How to end, save by a tremendous discussion, in which every life shall have its voice – a mosaic – or – – . I do not know. The difficulty is that its all at high pressure. I have not yet mastered the speaking voice. Yet I think something is there; & I propose to go on pegging it down, arduously, & then re-write, reading much of it aloud, like poetry. It will bear expansion. It is compressed I think. It is – whatever I make of it – a large & potential theme – which Orlando was not perhaps. At any rate, I have taken my fence.

Home from tea with Nessa & Angelica. A fine spring day. I walked along Oxford St. The buses are strung on a chain. People fight: struggle. Knocking each other off the pavement. Old bareheaded men; a motor car accident; &c. To walk alone ~~the~~ in London the greatest rest.

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21st April.

And we have got to go & dine with Raymond now,
this very potent, extraordinarily exciting warm evening
I stretch my window open & hear the humming
see a yellow window open in the hotel: I walked
back from Leicester Square - what queer
memories have got themselves mixed into this
evening I asked. Something from a very soft, rather
mystic evening; not feverish & hopeful; no: by the sea;
blue; youth. And I dropped in at the dressmaker
She has no teeth. She was stitching. She said
like a friend Mrs Woolf we are going to move.
And I thought you couldnt mind if I left out the
stitching & my eyes ached. All that's said
forgotten youth & happy & seems to thrust into
some soft tide. I cant get it right, naturally.
Nessa is at Charleston. They will have their
windows open: perhaps even sit by the pond.
She will think that is what I have made by
years of unknown work—my sons & my
daughter. She will be perfectly content (as I
suppose) Quentin fetching bottles: Clive immensely
good tempered. They will think of London with
dislike. Yet this is very exciting: what keeps me
were at Raymonds, a tug— that something
from Sybil—And so with change.

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4th April.

I am trying to sketch my last chapter - unsuccessfully; so will use 10 minutes to note my observations at Raymond. Chiefly upon the atmosphere of buggery. Lytton sat lit up with love & rapture when I deserted the delightful women, with all their gifts, for Mr. Williamson, brilliant & beautiful, but unknown, of Oxford. Raymond sat on the arm of Lytton's chair. Morgan came in from Meleager. And I went to see Tommie behind the scenes. He was looking very nice in shorts. Eddy came in from ~~the~~ Cochran's Cabaret. He had had to stand & was [I am making up The Waves] peevish. [humour is what it lacks] Arthur, he said, Ensor [I forget] ~~you~~ looked very pretty in a white suit — the rest oh so hideous. At this the other buggers pricked their ears & became somehow silly. I mean rather giggly & coy. An atmosphere entirely secluded, intimate, & set on one object: all agreed upon the things they liked. Raymond barked once or twice rudely (he is underbred, in voice anyhow) his feeling that I was nothing, scoffing. told me how Gerbault loathed women; then protested that I was not to believe all the stories of D'Annunzio's dark: there was another side: she had maltreated him. A profuse; raucous, & obtrusive. A photograph of Stephen Tennant (who scoffed at the dame dressmaker) in a Jacksoon gown to the same dressmaker) in a tunic, ~~a~~ in an attitude was shown about; also little boys at a private school. Morgan became more unfamiliar, discussing the beauties of Hilton Young's slipper. "His skating is magnificent" (there is an undertone deploring-some woman's behaviour) This all made a ne a tinkling private, giggling, impression. or as though I were in a men's urinal.

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Wed.
April 9th

What I now think (about The Waves) is that I can give in a very few strokes the essentials of a person's character. It should be done boldly, almost as caricature. I have yesterday entered what may be the last lap. Like every piece of the book it goes by fits & starts. I never get away with it; but am tugged back. I hope this makes for solidity; & must look to my sentences. The abandonment of Orlando & Lighthouse is much checked by the extreme difficulty of the form — as it was in Jacob's Room. I think this is the furthest development so far; but of course it may miss fire somewhere. I think I have kept stoically to the original conception. What I fear is that the re-writing will have to be so drastic that I may entirely muddle it somehow. It's bound to be very imperfect. But I think it possible that I have got my statues against the sky.

April 11th

Yesterday walked through the Waddesdon greenhouses with Mr Johnson. There were single red leaves taking root in sand. Cyclamen by the hundred gross. Azaleas massed like military bands. Carnations at different stages. Vines being nicked thin by sedulous men. Nothing older than 40 years, but now readymade in perfection. A fig tree that had a thousand lean regular branches. The statues tied up, like dead horses, in sheets. The whole thing dead. Made. Wealth. Established — possible in the year 1880 or thereabouts. One flower wd. have given more pleasure than this dozens of grosses. And the heat. & the tidiness & the accuracy & the organisation. Mr Johnson like a nectarine, hard, red, ripe. He was taught all he knew by Miss Alice, & accepted admiration as his colour. So he called

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Sunday April 13th

I read Shakespeare directly I have finished writing. When my mind is agape & red hot. Then it is astonishing. I never yet knew how amazing his stretch & speed & word coining power is, until I felt it utterly outpace & outrace my own, seeming to start equal & then I see him draw ahead & do things I could not in my wildest tumult & utmost press of mind imagine. Even the less known & worser plays are written at a speed that is quicker than anybody else's quickest; & the words drop so fast one cant pick them up. Look at this, Upon a gather'd lily almost wither'd (that is a pure accident: I happen to light on it.) Evidently the pliancy of his mind was so complete that he could furbish out any train of thought; &, relaxing, let fall a shower of such unregarded flowers. Why then should anyone else attempt to write. This is not 'writing' at all. Indeed, I could say that Shre surpasses literature altogether, if I knew what I meant.

I meant to make this note a Waddesdon greenhouse. There were rows of hydrangeas, mostly a deep blue. Yes, said Mr Johnson, Lord Kitchener came here & asked how we blued them... I said Sir put things in the earth. He said he did too. But sometimes with all ones care, they shot a bit pink. Miss Alice wouldn't have that. If there was a trace of pink there, it wouldn't do. And he showed us a metallic leaf petalled hydrangea. No that wouldn't do for Miss Alice. It struck me, what madness & how easy to pin ones mind down to the blueness of hydrangeas, & to hypnotise Mr Johnson into thinking only of the blueness of hydrangeas. & to be made to go to him every evening, for she scarcely saw anyone, & they would talk for two hours about the plants & politics. How easy to go mad over the blueness of hydrangeas & think of nothing else.

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Wednesday
23rd April

This is a very important morning in the history of the Waves, because I think I have turned the corner & see the last lap straight ahead. I think I have got Bernard into the final stride. He will go straight on now, & then stand at the door: & then there will be a last picture of the waves. We are at Rodmell: & I daresay I shall stay on a day or two (if I dare) so as not to break the current & finish it. O Lord & then a rest; & then an article; & then back again to this hideous shaping & moulding. There may be some joys in it all the same.

Saturday
26th April.

Having had no letter for 3 days I feel my balloon shrunk. All that semi-transparent globe which my fame attaches to me is pricked: & I am a mere stick. This is very wholesome; & grey; & not altogether displeasing though flat.

Sunday
27th April.

A queer adventure, to come back & find Lottie in the house (having spent hours under the kitchen table) having been dismissed by Karin for stealing. She was sent with a policeman to the station. She is to sleep here tonight. And I am to see Karin.

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Tuesday April 29th

And I have just finished, with this very nib-full of ink, the last sentence of The Waves. I think I should record this for my own information. Yes, it was the greatest stretch of mind I ever knew; certainly the last pages; I dont think they flop as much as usual. And I think I have kept starkly & ascetically to the plan. So much I will say in self-congratulation. But I have never written a book so full of holes & patches; that will need re-building, yes, not only re-modelling. I suspect the structure is wrong. Never mind. I might have done something cheap & flimsy: & this is a reach after that vision I had, the unhappy summer — or three weeks — at Rodmell, after finishing the Light house. [And that reminds me — I must hastily provide my mind with something else, or it will again become pecking & wretched, — something imaginative, if possible & light: for I shall tire of Hazlitt & criticism after the first divine relief —. & I feel pleasantly aware of various adumbrations in the back of my head; a life of Duncan: no, something about canvases glowing in a studio: but that can wait.]

I must run upstairs & peep in & tell Leonard & ask about Lottie, who has been after a place; & by this way injured yesterdays lap I am afraid with her vicissitudes.

Pm

And I think to myself as I walk down Southampton Row "And I have given you a new book."

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1st May

And I have completely ruined my morning. Yet these mornings are literally free. They sent a book from the Times, as if advertising the release of my liberty; & feeling my liberty weigh upon me, I rushed to the cable & told Van Doren I would write a Scott. And now having read Scott, & the perky & impertinent Collins whom I fight provided to allow fatty payments, I wont & cant;—have got into a fret trying to read it, & writing to Richmond today I cant: & have wasted the brilliant first of May which makes my skylight blue & gold; have only a rubbish heap in my head; cant read, & cant write, & cant think. The truth is, of course, I want to be back at The Waves. Yes that is the truth. Unlike all my other books in every way it is unlike them in this, that I begin to re-write it, & conceive it again with ardour, directly I have done. I begin to see what I had in my mind; & want to begin cutting out masses of irrelevance, & clearing, sharpening & making the good phrases shine. One wave after another. No room. & so on. But then we are going touring Devon—Cornwall on Sunday which means a week off: & then I shall perhaps make my critical brain do a months work, for exercise. What could it be set to? Or a story?—no, not another story now. Perhaps Miss Burney's ~~Jt~~ half sister's story,

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Sunday 18th May

The thing is now to live with energy & mastery, desperately. To despatch each day high handedly. To make much shorter work of the days than one used. To feel each like a wave slapping up against one. So not to dawdle & dwindle contemplating this & that. To do what ever comes along with decision; going to the Hawthornden Prize giving valiantly & lightheartedly: to buy a coat; to Long Barn; to Angelica's school: Wandering through the morning's work (Hazlitt now) then adventuring. And when one has cleared a way, then to go directly to a shop & buy a desk, a book case. No more regrets & indecisions. That is the right way to deal with life now that I am 48: & to make it more & more important & vivid as one grows old.

This is all very well: but whatever Nelly then gets taken ill with her kidneys, must have an operation & soberly & seriously a whole fortnight has been blown from my life; because I have had to hang about to see Elly, to buy food, to arrange with Tankin, to arrange with the hospital; to go there in an ambulance. My mind in order to work needs to be stretched tight & flat. It has been broken into shivers. With that plodding I have managed to write about the Women's Guild. And I consider setting to work on the Waves. I have had over 6 weeks holiday from it. Only again; this morning is ruined because I sit waiting a char, who does not come. And we have Lyn & Ivor R. Stows to tea.

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15th June. How many steps there are here! Nothing said of our tour through the West: nothing said of L's operation: of Tampen, who lost my key broke tumblers & cooked with the jaded inspiration of one who had been a good cook: & nothing said of the divine relief of my great evenings without servants: — how we dine out or at the Cock: & how we say, can't this last? & then how I rang up Mrs Walter; & that experiment, an arduous one, began tomorrow. Leonard is not apt at a crisis. I mean his caution stacks his back up. He foresees obstacles. He has a philanthropic side too, which I distrust. Must be good to dependents. I am too hurried to thread these notes wider. At any rate, Mrs W. an American, who wishes to work, has been a journalist, is an intellectual, comes into our service tomorrow; being, as it were, Miss Ritchie, or Lyn Irvine. I have to give her orders: & she has to empty the slops. Will it work? will it last? Anyhow — every sentence begins anyhow — an interesting experience.

16th June. Mrs Walter is now here. And she says "What do you want with a char?" But then new broom &c. She is not new in one sense: rather old & lined; no, younger than I am: but a hard face. I think; but I forbear to crack her kernel. The interest will be to get a new light on housekeeping. My books are now my idol. Can I manage a hen? How many pints? How many pounds of butter? Oh to be rid of servants — for all the emotions they breed — trust, suspicion, benevolence, gratitude, philanthropy, are necessarily bad.

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And Nelly is now dependent on me for a doctor; turned out of hospital at
a moments notice. I am amused to watch the conflict between L.
& me. I hold a brief (suddenly) for Walters; he (suddenly) for
Nelly. If the books are high, he secretly rejoices. If ~~L~~
the food is good, I secretly denigrate Nellys cooking.
It is odd how those old scenes rankle in my mind — how
unwilling I am to have her back. Partly the silence is so
grateful; & partly the absence of lower classes. I
think with real shrinking of having her ~~to~~ in control again.
Gertie is obliging friendly affectionate; & I cannot
bring myself to talk to her as I should. I am
always seeing myself told to "leave my room"

But enough — a useful phrase.
I dont know why, but I have started this book. The summer is
in full swing. Its elements this year are Nessa, Duncan,
Ethel Smyth. Vita & ~~re~~ re-writing the Waves.
We are very prosperous. On making up half yearly
accounts, we find that we each get £425:
& ~~to~~ next year is sure, owing to the gigantic sale of this
Edwardian — ~~as~~ it verges on the 20,000. And this
not a very good book. Ethel Smyth drops in,
dropped in yesterday for instance, when I was
so methodically devoting my morning to
finishing the last page of type setting: On Being Ill;
I heard a ring, went up, & saw an old char in her white
alpaca coat; sat her down; ~~was~~ disburdened her
of cardboard boxes; full of white pinks: & ~~her~~
looked at her rather monumental old Colonels
face (girt round with an inappropriate necklace,

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(on the way going to lunch with Beecham) I get, generally, two letters daily. I daresay the old fires of Sapphism are blazing for the last time. In her heyday she must have been formidable — ruthless, tenacious, exacting, lightning quick, so confident; with something of the directness & largeness of genius. Though they say she writes ^music^ like an old drunken German band master. Her style in writing memoirs though is to her credit — indeed she has ridden hard hard through life; & accumulated an astonishing number of observations, with which she spatters her conversation so as to drive L. almost frantic. One shock of hers lasted 20 minutes unbroken, he says, the other night. We were starting for a picnic at Ken Wood with Nessa & Duncan. Then sublime ~~[illegible]~~ ineptitude made me laugh & made Ethel laugh & made Eddy peevish. Thrice we sat in the garage, heaving, rotating, stinking. Then we stuck in Gower Street. The night drew on & the wind rose. A shot of rain descended. We heaved our way up to Hampstead. The house was cadaverous; the rhododendrons blanched. Where should we dine? Better go back to Fitzroy St — which we did; & dined off sandwiches & strawberries about 10 o'clock in the highest glee. She is a game old bird — an old age entirely superior in vitality to majority.

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And to tell the truth in the 15 minutes that remain before I go up to Mrs Waller cold & esquisite but rather expensive lunch — to tell the truth I am slightly annoyed, both with Margaret & with Lord Birrell. There were two kind acts of mine: the Women's Guild article & the article on B. Neither has thanked me. M. sent a postcard. Yet I spent two or even 3 weeks on that letter; & worked & worked. Never — this is the moral — do a kindness in writing. Never agree to use one's art as an act of friendship. And therefore refuse to write about Maurice Baring, as he wishes.

We came into Ethel's drawing room last Thursday & found a row standing against the window — ~~to~~ Joyce the Dss. of Sermoneta, M. Baring; & I said to to myself. Can I tell the story?. I said to Maurice as we plodded after Joyce — Ethel running helter skelter after her great fuzzy dog — "This is like a party in literature — like Jane Austen's Box Hill party!" There was a shade & a formality & a deliberateness about it that made it a real entertainment — with longueurs, with crises, with labels, with culminations. We all had to walk. We all had to do this, & do that. Ethel's home is better than I expected. She has more beauty & even comfort about than I expected from her alpaca coat. The red & pink roses were thick

NYPL

on the walls. The flowers were bunch on the bed. all was Glowing & bright. She has white roughcast walls. There is no furniture that has cost more than a pound or two — much is old schoolroom furniture, endeared to her by her intense egotistic imagination. "It was there Mary sat, when Mary played the piano.. And I said Mary couldn't you play G. sharp instead of G. natural... That's the bed — Rosemary you will have this room when you come to stay — where Dorset used to sleep. lying across: (because it is an old iron bed) And that's my father & mother — she was the artist." But I got the impression of a very genuine, breezy, blown mind; a free, entirely energised character — no impediments no inhibitions — the perfect talk with Maurice. "Just a nephew as young Ethel, with two names" "Well you might have — with two names" "No. I want you the sense of her largeness, & ~~wee~~ space & ease & good breeding & character. She is, oddly, much more expert as a hostess than as a guest; doesn't talk too much; is penetrating & quick, & has this delicious ease in ~~pe~~ summoning, conjuring up, people, like Lady Balfour & Mrs Lyttelton from the neighbourhood. They sat on the sofa while I, sipping champagne, talked fast & furious to Maurice B. who turned lobster colour, & trembled, & chattered about his books. There were 5 people who used to help me: all are now dead. He has had his sorrows: I dont know what: loved ladies I daresay

NYPL

And I went down again to Working on Monday (this is written waiting for Vita, on a very wet cold afternoon. She is going to drive in Ward to look at a wardrobe. I am going to buy a gilt wardrobe I think. Well, it is very wet, & I am rather discomposed, with making 2 articles at once & so on. And I am not dining (here.)

23rd July

Edith Sitwell has grown very fat, powders her thickly, gilds her nails with silver paint, wears a turban & looks like an ivory elephant, like the Emperor Heliogabalus. I have never seen such a change. She is mature, majestical. She is monumental. Her fingers are crusted with white coral. She is altogether composed. A great many people were there—she presided. But though thus composed, her eyes are red-lined & humorous. The old Empress remembers her scallywag days. We all sat at her feet—cased in Hunder black slippers, the only remnants of her slipperman & slenderness—who wears the like? Poke in a nightcap? No: the imperial majesty must be included. We hardly talked together. & I felt myself gone there rather mistakenly. had she not asked me very affectionately if she might come & see me alone. Her room was crowded with odds & ends of foreigners: the uncrowned King of Barcelona; Gerald's partner: Osbert; Lady Lavery &c. She said Lady L. discussed the air crash. The Bon Dieu had taken people then all at the right time. They had all done with life. Our too she would have been glad to die... This refers

NYPL

to the daughter of Lord Dufferin Lady Ednam &c. I was driving down to the Temple with Vita. & we bought an Standard in the Gateway. "Killed returning" she said. Well it cant be Harold I said. Then I read at Lady Ednam, Marquis Dufferin (for so they reported him) & then in the stop press Lord Dufferin. What Lady Ednam! Dufferin! she cried. There was Harold on the pavement before the house. "Yes, he said, its Lady Ednam" But its Freddy too" cried Vita (so she spoke confusedly) God said Harold "its read the stop press. Now what are we to do." I cant broadcast said Vita. I must tell my mother said Harold. First I'll get the paper though. Good Lord — yes its Dufferin & Lady Ednam. Is that Lady Carnock. Darling I have some bad news for you. Have you seen the paper? Freddy's been in a smash. He's killed, they think. Could you tell Aunt Lal?" What did you mother say Harold?. Just 'Oh'. Now we cant dine with Lady Cunard. Oh yes dear we must. Perhaps I shall have to go down & see them. It was, as one says, like a scene in a play. The newspaper: the telephoning: the extreme simplicity & composure of each: Vita's typing: the man cleaning shoes: Harold telephoning, like a man in a play. So they drove off that hot glary evening to Lady Cunard: dinner at 9. 30 people: & I did not go. [& I hear the whole party waited for me for half an hour]

NYPL

July 26th

Just back from a night at Long Barn, where I retrieved that last about Emeralds party, waiting half an hour all in the silks too for the smash of their best friends. And Lady E. & Mrs S. strewed Kent with £62,000 worth of jewels. Jewels in their hats, round their necks: somehow this makes me less sorry for them; undemocratic though I am. I rather like thinking of pearls pendant from oak trees.

I have 15 — no 12 — minutes before lunch; & am all of a quiver with home coming to L:. to 2 newts in the bathroom, letters (from Ethel, & flowers) books &c. a very nice homecoming; & I daresay a sample of my life, picked out of the mass (as this, when one comes back) makes me a little amazed at my own happiness. I daresay few women are happier — not that I am contentedly anything; but feel that I have had a good draught of humdrum life & find much Champagne in it. It has not been dull — my marriage; not at all.

I liked rambling over Vita's new field, & talking to Mrs Page about the hay crop; & then champagne for dinner — an extravagance of Harold's; sleep in the sitting room; a log fire; dogs; aeroplanes at night; dogs again; & breakfast in bed — mushroom & peach & hot bath, & so home, an I say to the newts & Leonard. Clive will come to tea. Perhaps we may go to the play. And perhaps I might decide to have a new Educated woman as servant. This comes on top of a day of Nelly Lottie & Mrs Mansfield. Their joke their presence their familiarity, all rouse the usual reflections.

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Passing the Public House this Sunday afternoon, the buzz of voices through the door was exactly the same as at an Evening party. My first thought was Censorious: people in a public house. But this was soon corrected. I don't see much difference between the Markham Arms & Argyll House: or 3 Albert Road if it comes to that: Except that we drink champagne, wear dress, & I sit between Lord Gage & Bernstorff.

Monday July 28th

A queer inconclusive but possibly fruitful conversation with Mrs Walter this morning. I think she would like to stay, if we could offer more wages. The truth is her husband has weaknesses; a flirt. And she wishes to devote herself to us entirely – to do everything – that I should never have to order coffee. But she is going to think it out in August in Italy with Karl. I rather suspect (in my private mind) that we shall make a break here with Nelly, & take her – a great risk; rather fun: I feel 10 years younger instantly at the thought of a change. Anyhow, my constant relief at the absence of Nelly seems to prove that the system is as wrong as I've always said. Rooms empty of servants: to eat quietly: to have no fuss, no menial condescending talk. Other drawbacks suggest themselves – still anything for experiment – anything.

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Wednesday
Aug 6th

There is water at Rodmell: oh yes, & this the best, the freest, the comfortablest summer we have ever had — Figure to yourself feet swollen in boots. One takes them off — that is my state without poor dear Nelly; with rai a bright Annie. The rain pelts — look out (as the people in the Waves are always saying) now. My dinner is cooking. I have so many rooms to sit in, I scarcely know which to choose. And new chairs. And comfort everywhere. & some beginnings of beauty. But it is the freedom from servants that is the groundwork & bedrock of all this expansion — After lunch we are alone till breakfast. I say, as I walk the downs, never again, never again. Cost what it may, I will never put my head into that noose again.

I walk; I read; I write, without terrors & constrictions. I make bread. I cook mushrooms. I wander in & out of the kitchen. I have a resource besides reading. That why we ever suffered that discomfort so long. That presence always grumbling always aghast (for that's unfair) at a different angle from ours, making Glamo

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Wednesday
Aug 6th

This is written at Rodmell: oh yes, & this the best, the freest, the comfortablest summer we have ever had. Figure to yourself feet swollen in boots. One takes them off — that is my state without poor dear Nelly; with nice bright Annie. The rain pelts — look at it (as the people in the waves are always saying) now. My dinner is cooking. I have so many rooms to sit in, I scarcely know which to choose. And new chairs. And comfort everywhere. & some beginnings of beauty. But it is the freedom from servants that is the groundwork & bedrock of all this expansion. After lunch we are alone till breakfast. I say, as I walk the downs, never again never again. Cost what it may, I will never put my head into that noose again.

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Glamo

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Wed.
Aug. 20th.

Last night was Quentin's birthday. "Another Quentin's birthday over" said Maynard, at the gate after the fireworks. Counting perhaps the remaining years. The rockets went roaring up, & scattered their gold grain. That is an old phrase; but I always think of grain when I see them. I can never find another. The willows were lit up green over the pond. The bonfire was forked, like branches in a wind. Nessa, in red, threw on green. Angelica, whirling & twirling like an old screaming witch, danced round it. "Childhood—true childhood" said Lydia. For some moments everything that was said had the quality of sayings in a Tchekhov play.

I am writing while my potatoes boil. It has been a hot heavy ugly cloudy day; the sea sulphurous: & the dogs have barked all round the village, one starting another. And the men have hammered on the Shore. And I have been driven out of it. I have slept here, over an article by Vernon Lee, sent me in Ethel's daily letter. Ethel's letters are daily: for we have so much to make up. "Time is short" "I would like to see Italy before I die" the rage intensifies letters. Should I curtail her—curb them? I think not. If one adventures, adventure wholly. And she is so courageous, so remarkable therewith, that it would be mere poltroonery for me to hold off for fear of ridicule (still they hammer, at 6.45.) So I let that old bonfire rage red & perhaps throw on a screen on it. It's a very happy free, & indeed to me occasionally sublime summer. Yes. I think I have decided against Italy: but don't let me rub that sore. I think I am on the back of The Waves now. Then my walks. How lovely [illegible]

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exploring yesterday to the Swamps: how strange that in almost 20 years I have never been that way — out along the marsh road beyond Sutton house. I see a line I might make to Lewes. I fell in & twisted my ankle. I saw an astonishing assortment of cones & angles of grey & gold down, back against back. I was very happy. I like the slope, the profound thin happiness but. One day too I walked to Firle, in a shower & found a 4 bladed pocket knife.

The Waves is I think resolving itself (I am at page 100) into a series of dramatic soliloquies. The thing is to keep them running homogeneously in & out, in the rhythm of the waves. Can they be read consecutively? I know nothing about that. I think this is the greatest opportunity I have yet been able to give myself: therefore I suppose the most complete failure. Yet I respect myself for writing this book — yes — even though it exhibits my congenital faults.

Janet Vaughan is engaged, & Gerald Brenan married. Barbara last night was aged, autumnal, elemental, peevish; & very red & beaky. Julian Bell — Clive undoubtedly on a fresh tack which does not allow gentleness with me.

I make these notes waiting in vain for that very interesting remark to occur which was on the tip of my tongue; & cd not now emerge, though I bait & wait. If one waits, better notes, suddenly one thinks of something profound — I am reading Dante, & I say, yes, this makes all writing unnecessary. This surpasses 'writing', as I say about Shre. I read the Inferno for half an hour at the end of my own page: & that is the place of honour: that is to put the page into the furnace — if I have a furnace. Now to mark the potatoes. 2

2 Have lost my temper.

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Monday 25th Aug.

Ethel came for a night on Friday, & in order to drown Percy's mowing I will write here; for the pressure of writing is a protection: & the dogs & the shore have been bad today. But they are bad because I am re-writing Hazlitt; having slotted the waves at the break; & I am happy; & its a very hot day; & we have been into Lewes, & I walked home part of the way. This is the only really hot day we have had. But I wish if I can to describe Ethel. At least let me help in a few notes of this curious unnatural friendship. I say unnatural because she is so old, ~~got~~ & everything is unexpressed. Her head is an enormous edge over the temples. Music is there, she said, tapping her temples. That was her insanity. What Walter said; what Wach (or someone) said — she cannot refrain from repeating what I guess to be very worn compliments; often repeated to herself at dead of night. For she cannot get over unfortunately her own ill-treatment. A refrain occurs; & this all the more marked for being in contrast with the generosity, sense, balance, & shrewdness of all else. Off her own mania, & the conspiracy against her — for the press are determined to burke her, though she feels every inch — that's the true grit — she is an admirable sport. Oh yes & more. I went through some odd vicissitudes in the way of emotion. Lying in my chair in the firelight she looked 18; she looked a young vigorous handsome woman. Suddenly this vanishes: then there is the old crag that has been beaten by the waves: the humane battered face that makes one respect human nature. or rather feel that this indomitable & persistent. Then. she is ~~indomma~~ indomitable & persistent.

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worldly: by which I mean something I like; unembarrassed,
aired, sunned, acquainted with this way of life &
that: lived in many societies: taken her own way in
thrust & tie vigorously unimpeded: then I am
conscious, surprised, of the compliment she pays me.
But then she is over 70. And (oh the dogs — oh
Percy! — & I had marked off such a lovely evening —
what am I to do?) She is sometimes
startlingly quick. She has a lightning speed of
perception which I liken to my own. But she is
more robust: better grounded a fact than I am.
She takes in a situation in one word. I
told her about Margaret & my difficulties with
the poker. No woman of 30 could have seen so
swiftly or put the matter more succinctly in a
nutshell. (Her fault as a talker is deafness.) I
had some interesting moments. About jealousy for
instance. "Do you know Virginia, I dont like other
women being fond of you." "Then you must be in love
with me Ethel" "I have never loved anyone so much"
(Is there something senile in this? I dont know)
Ever since I saw you I have thought of nothing else ie"
But ~~I want affection~~. I had not meant to tell you.
But I want affection. "You may take advantage of this".
No. Well, this, so far as I can boil it down, is
Ethel's state. But what I like in her is not
I think her love — for how difficult this to unravel
that unintelligible — this compact of so many
things — the vagaries — I am sensitive to the affectation —
what I like is the indomitable old crag; & a
certain smile, very wide & benignant. But dear me
I am not in love with Ethel. And
oh yes — her experiences.

NYPL

28th Aug.

It is the hottest day of the year: & so it was last year, almost on this day: & I was at Long Barn. & there was the Eton tutor, a nice young man with blue eyes white teeth & straight nose — & he now lies at the bottom of a crevasse in Switzerland — this very hot evening — lies crushed beside his Mary ~~Lees~~ Irving: there are the two bodies for ever. I suppose some ice drops. & nothing stirs: the light is blue, green; or wholly black; nothing stirs round them. Frozen, near together, in their tweeds & hobnail boots there they lie. And I am here; writing in my lodge, looking over the harvest fields. I suppose they felt whirled, like hoops: battered; senseless, after the first horror of feeling out of control. A very violent summer. So I said to Janie Bussy Julia & Quentin on the terrace last Sunday.

The church was finished today & the scaffolding taken down. I am reading R. Lehmann, with some interest & admiration — she has a clear hard mind, beating up now & again to poetry: but I am an snail appalled by the machinery of fiction: its so much work for little result. Yet I see no other ~~ou~~ outlet for her gifts. And these books dont matter — they flash a clear light here & there: but I suppose no more. But she has all the gifts (I suppose) that I lack; can give story & development & character & so on.

Annie offered me a paper weight of Strahan in Holland today in return for our paying her oculists bill.

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2nd Sept

I was walking down the path with Lydia. "If this dont stop," I said, referring to the bitter taste in my mouth — the pressure like a wire cage of sound over my head, then I am ill: yes, very likely I am doomed, diseased, dead. Damn it!" Here I fell down — saying "How strange — flowers." In scraps I felt & knew myself carried into the sitting room, by Maynard. Saw L. look very frightened: said I would go upstairs: the drumming of my heart, the pain, the effort got violent at the doorstep; overcame me; like gas; I was unconscious: then the ~~bed & ...~~ wall & the picture returned to my eyes: I saw life again. "Strange" I said. & so lay. gradually recovering till when I crept up to bed. Today, Tuesday, I am in the lodge & Ethel come. Valiant old woman! But this brush with death was instructive & odd. Had I woken in the divine presence wd. have been with fists clenched & fury on my lips. "I dont want to come here at all!" So I should have exclaimed. I wonder if this is the general state of people who die violently. If so figure the condition of Heaven after a battle.

I think one might write a fantasia called Reflections on the night of a daddy long legs. There was one just now (I have moved in from the lodge, thus disturbing both L. & Annie) crawling over the handmade paper on which I have to sign my name 600 times: This bright penny patch was hardly pleasure. Yes. & then one dislikes daddies because they eat one's things plants. One has some kindness for them very few pleasures. What is their relation to insects?

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It suddenly comes over me how I used to look at a mass of paper to use at by the eager eye in the Museum — what a tremendous desire to write I had.

I will use these last pages to sum up our circumstances. A map of the world.

Leaving out the subject of Nelly, which bores me, we are now much freer & richer than we have ever been. For years I never had a pound extra; a comfortable bed, or a chair that did not want stuffing. This morning Hammond delivered 4 perfectly comfortable arm chairs — & we think very little of it.

I seldom see Lytton; that's true. The reason is that we dont fit in, I imagine, to his parties, nor he to ours; but that if we can meet & so in solitude, all goes as usual. Yet what do one's friends mean to one, if one only sees them 8 times a year? Morgan I keep up with in our chronically spasmodic way. We are all very much aware of life, & seldom do anything we do not want to. Our family relations are young, fertile, & intimate. This year 5— is Julian & Quentin change so much. This year Q. is shabbygenius natural & gifted; last year he was foppish, finicky & affected. Julian is publishing with Chatto & Windus. As for Nessa & Duncan I am persuaded that nothing can be now destructive of that easy relationship, because it is based on Bohemianism. My bent that way increases — in spite of the prodigious fame (Orlando sold at . . .

July 15th: I am going through a phase of obscurity: I am not a writer: I am nothing: but I am quite content) I am more & more

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attracted by looseness, freedom, & eating one's dinner off a table anywhere, having cooked it previously. This rhythm (I say I am writing The Waves to a rhythm not to a plot) ~~so~~ is in harmony with the painters'. Ease & shabbiness & content therefore are all ensured.
Adrian I never see. I keep constant with Maynard. I never see Saxon. I am slightly repelled by his lack of generosity: yet would like to write to him.
Perhaps I will. George Duckworth, feeling the grave yawn, wishes to lunch with Nessa: wishes to feel again the old sentimental emotions. After all, Nessa & I are his only women relations. A queer cawing of homing rooks, this is. I daresay the delights of snobbishness somewhat fail in later life — & we have done — 'made good' — that is his expression.
My map of the world lacks rotundity. There is Vita. Yes — she was here the other day, after her Italian tour, with 2 boys: a dusty car, sandshoes & Florentine candlesticks, novels & so on tumbling about on the seats. I use my friends rather as giglamps: There's another field I see: by your light — over there is a hill. I widen my landscape.